

§ 35.6550

40 CFR Ch. I (7-1-00 Edition)

as, and more economically than, contractors, or that an emergency necessitates the use of the Force Account.

(b) Where the value of Force Account services exceeds \$25,000, the recipient must receive written authorization for use from the award official.

PROCUREMENT REQUIREMENTS UNDER A COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

§ 35.6550 Procurement system standards.

(a) Recipient standards—(1) Procurement system evaluation. (i) An applicant or recipient must evaluate its own procurement system to determine if the system meets the intent of the requirements of this subpart. After evaluating its procurement system, the applicant or recipient must complete the “Procurement System Certification” (EPA Form 5700-48) and submit the form to EPA with its application.

(ii) The certification will be valid for two years or for the length of the project period specified in the Cooperative Agreement, whichever is greater, unless the recipient substantially revises its procurement system or the award official determines that the recipient is not following the intent of the requirements in this part. (See subparagraph (a)(4) of this section regarding EPA right to review.) If the recipient substantially revises its procurement system, the recipient must re-evaluate its system and submit a revised EPA Form 5700-48.

(2) Certified procurement system. Even if the applicant or recipient has certified that its procurement system meets the intent of the requirements of this subpart, the EPA award official retains the authority as stated in:

(i) Section 35.6565(d)(1)(iii), “Non-competitive proposals,” regarding award official authorization of non-competitive proposals;

(ii) Section 35.6565(b), “Sealed bids (formal advertising),” regarding award official approval for the use of a procurement method other than sealed bidding for a remedial action award contract, except for Architectural/Engineering services and post-removal site control;

(iii) Section 35.6550(a)(9), “Protests,” regarding EPA review of protests; and

(iv) 40 CFR 31.36(g)(2)(iv), “Awarding Agency Review,” regarding the review of proposed awards over \$25,000 which are to be awarded to other than the apparent low bidder under a sealed bid procurement.

(3) Noncertified procurement system. If the applicant or recipient has not certified that its procurement system meets the intent of the requirements of this subpart, then the recipient must follow the requirements of this subpart and allow EPA preaward review of proposed procurement actions that will use EPA funds. In addition, the recipient’s contractors and subcontractors must submit their cost or price data on EPA Form 5700-41, “Cost or Price Summary Format for Subagreements Under U.S. EPA Grants,” or in another format which provides information similar to that required by EPA Form 5700-41. This specific requirement is an addition to the requirements regarding cost and price analysis described in § 35.6585 of this subpart.

(4) EPA review. EPA reserves the right to review any recipient’s procurement system or procurement action under a Cooperative Agreement.

(5) Code of conduct. The recipient must comply with the requirements of 40 CFR 31.36(b)(3), which describes standards of conduct for employees, officers, and agents of the recipient.

(6) Completion of contractual and administrative issues. (i) The recipient is responsible for the settlement and satisfactory completion in accordance with sound business judgement and good administrative practice of all contractual and administrative issues arising out of procurements under the Cooperative Agreement.

(ii) EPA will not substitute its judgement for that of the recipient unless the matter is primarily a Federal concern.

(iii) Violations of law will be referred to the local, State, Tribal, or Federal authority having proper jurisdiction.

(7) Selection procedures. The recipient must have written selection procedures for procurement transactions.

(i) EPA may not participate in a recipient’s selection panel except to provide technical assistance. EPA staff providing such technical assistance:

Environmental Protection Agency

§ 35.6550

(A) Shall constitute a minority of the selection panel (limited to making recommendations on qualified offers and acceptable proposals based on published evaluation criteria) for the contractor selection process; and

(B) Are not permitted to participate in the negotiation and award of contracts.

(ii) When selecting a contractor, recipients:

(A) May not use EPA contractors to provide any support related to procuring a State contractor.

(B) May use the Corps of Engineers for review of State bidding documents, requests for proposals and bids and proposals received.

(8) *Award.* The recipient may award a contract only to a responsible contractor, as described in 40 CFR 31.36(b)(8), and must ensure that each contractor performs in accordance with all the provisions of the contract. (See also 35.6560 of this subpart regarding debarred and suspended contracts.)

(9) *Protest procedures.* The recipient must comply with the requirements described in 40 CFR 31.36(b)(12) regarding protest procedures.

(10) *Reporting.* The recipient must comply with the requirements for procurement reporting contained in §35.6665 of this subpart.

(11) *Intergovernmental agreements.* (i) To foster greater economy and efficiency, recipients are encouraged to enter into intergovernmental agreements for procurement or use of common goods and services.

(ii) Although intergovernmental agreements are not subject to the requirements set forth at §§35.6550 through 35.6610, all procurements under intergovernmental agreements are subject to these requirements except for procurements that are:

(A) Incidental to the purpose of the assistance agreement; and

(B) Made through a central public procurement unit.

(12) *Value engineering.* The recipient is encouraged to include value engineering clauses in contracts for construction projects of sufficient size to offer reasonable opportunities for cost reductions.

(b) *Contractor standards—(1) Disclosure requirements regarding Potentially Re-*

sponsible Party relationships. The recipient must require each prospective contractor to provide with its bid or proposal:

(i) Information on its financial and business relationship with all PRPs at the site and with the contractor's parent companies, subsidiaries, affiliates, subcontractors, or current clients at the site. Prospective contractors under a Core Program Cooperative Agreement must provide comparable information for all sites within the recipient's jurisdiction. (This disclosure requirement encompasses past financial and business relationships, including services related to any proposed or pending litigation, with such parties);

(ii) Certification that, to the best of its knowledge and belief, it has disclosed such information or no such information exists; and

(iii) A statement that it shall disclose immediately any such information discovered after submission of its bid or proposal or after award. The recipient shall evaluate such information and if a member of the contract team has a conflict of interest which prevents the team from serving the best interests of the recipient, the prospective contractor may be declared non-responsible and the contract awarded to the next eligible bidder or offeror.

(2) *Conflict of interest—(i) Conflict of interest notification.* The recipient must require the contractor to notify the recipient of any actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest regarding any individual working on a contract assignment or having access to information regarding the contract. This notification shall include both organizational conflicts of interest and personal conflicts of interest. If a personal conflict of interest exists, the individual who is affected shall be disqualified from taking part in any way in the performance of the assigned work that created the conflict of interest situation.

(ii) *Contract provisions.* The recipient must incorporate the following provisions or their equivalents into all contracts, except those for well-drilling, fence erecting, plumbing, utility hook-ups, security guard services, or electrical services:

(A) *Contractor data.* The contractor shall not provide data generated or otherwise obtained in the performance of contractor responsibilities under a contract to any party other than the recipient, EPA, or its authorized agents for the life of the contract, and for a period of five years after completion of the contract.

(B) *Employment.* The contractor shall not accept employment from any party other than the recipient or Federal agencies for work directly related to the site(s) covered under the contract for five years after the contract has terminated. The recipient agency may exempt the contractor from this requirement through a written release. This release must include EPA concurrence.

(3) *Certification of independent price determination.* The recipient must require that each contractor include in its bid or proposal a certification of independent price determination. This document certifies that no collusion, as defined by Federal and State anti-trust laws, occurred during bid preparation.

(4) *Recipient's Contractors.* The recipient must require its contractor to comply with the requirements in §§ 35.6270(a) (1) and (2); 35.6320 (a) and (b); 35.6335; 35.6700; and 35.6705. For additional contractor requirements, see also §§ 35.6710(c); 35.6590(c); and 35.6610.

§ 35.6555 Competition.

The recipient must conduct all procurement transactions in a manner providing maximum full and open competition.

(a) *Restrictions on competition.* Inappropriate restrictions on competition include the following:

- (1) Placing unreasonable requirements on firms in order for them to qualify to do business;
- (2) Requiring unnecessary experience and excessive bonding requirements;
- (3) Noncompetitive pricing practices between firms or between affiliated companies;
- (4) Noncompetitive awards to consultants that are on retainer contracts;
- (5) Organizational conflicts of interest;
- (6) Specifying only a "brand name" product, instead of allowing "an equal"

product to be offered and describing the performance of other relevant requirements of the procurement; and

(7) Any arbitrary action in the procurement process.

(b) *Geographic and Indian Tribe preferences*—(1) *Geographic.* When conducting a procurement, the recipient must prohibit the use of statutorily or administratively imposed in-State or local geographical preferences in evaluating bids or proposals. However, nothing in this section preempts State licensing laws. In addition, when contracting for architectural and engineering (A/E) services, the recipient may use geographic location as a selection criterion, provided that when geographic location is used, its application leaves an appropriate number of qualified firms, given the nature and size of the project, to compete for the contract.

(2) *Indian Tribe.* If the project benefits Indians, the recipient must comply with the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 (Pub. L. 93-638).

(c) *Written specifications.* The recipient's written specifications must include a clear and accurate description of the technical requirements and the qualitative nature of the material, product or service to be procured.

(1) This description must not contain features which unduly restrict competition, unless the features are necessary to:

- (i) Test or demonstrate a specific thing;
- (ii) Provide for necessary interchangeability of parts and equipment; or
- (iii) Promote innovative technologies.

(2) The recipient must avoid the use of detailed product specifications if at all possible.

(d) *Public notice.* When soliciting bids or proposals, the recipient must allow sufficient time (generally 30 calendar days) between public notice of the proposed project and the deadline for receipt of bids or proposals. The recipient must publish the public notice in professional journals, newspapers, or publications of general circulation over a reasonable area.