

Suppliers Guide to Completing the Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ)

Section 6 – Sustainability

The following guide is provided to help suppliers complete the Sustainability section of the PQQ. If you have any further questions in relation to completing your submission, please submit them via the EU-Supply portal before the clarification deadline noted in the documents.

Q6.1 – Do you have an Environmental or Sustainability Policy?

What is an Environmental Policy?

An Environmental Policy is a short document that sets out an organisation's environmental values and commitments. It may cover energy, water, waste, transport, pollution, conservation or any other environmental issue relevant to an organisation's operations.

Some organisations may choose to write a Sustainability Policy instead. A Sustainability Policy would contain not only the environmental commitments, but it might also include references to social, ethical and economic commitments, such as volunteering or specifying local suppliers.

The policy should provide a framework for setting environmental or sustainability objectives and targets, but it should not contain the specific details of the actions that will take place to achieve the objectives. More detailed information on how / when / who should be kept in a separate document (e.g. an action plan or an Environmental Management System).

Have a look online at the policies of other businesses in your sector, but don't copy them, it is important to write a policy that is relevant to your organisation.

Where to start

Identify the areas of your operation with the largest potential environmental or sustainability impacts. Include both positive and negative impacts. These could be:

Environmental Impacts

Use of energy
Use and disposal of water
Production & disposal of waste
Land contamination
Emissions to air
Transport
Site related: noise, odours, traffic
Packaging
Product life cycle
Abnormal operations: shutdowns
Emergencies: fire, spillage, flood
Planning: new developments
Suppliers: Environmental policies

Social Impacts:

Labour standards
Health and safety
Civil liberties
Social justice
Local community
Minority rights
Cultural issues
Accessibility
Equity
Heritage
Religious sensitivities

Economic Impacts

Return on investment
Local economy
Market capacity
Shareholders value
Innovation
Direct and indirect economic impacts
Market presence
Economic performance
Risk
Fair trade
Profit sharing
Living wage

Once you have a short list of your top activities, make commitments for what you are going to do about them. Include targets if possible. For example "We will monitor and reduce our electricity use by 5% in 2014"

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What to include in your Environmental Policy

Although there is no standard format for writing an Environmental or Sustainability Policy, it is good practice to include a commitment to comply with environmental legislation, prevent pollution and continuous improvement.

In addition, there are a few basic rules to follow to ensure clarity:

- Keep it short - if it's longer than a sheet of A4, then it's probably too long
- Introduce the business and state the overall aim of the policy
- Describe the significant environmental impacts of the business
- Avoid non-committal language like 'where possible', 'where practicable' or 'we aim to'
- Don't make claims that are open to misinterpretation, can't be substantiated, or can't be achieved: e.g. becoming carbon neutral or producing zero waste
- Get the policy signed, dated and endorsed by the Managing Director or Chief Executive
- Include the name of the person to contact with any queries
- Make it available to employees, customers and the public. Put it on your website, in your reception area and include it in marketing material and tenders if requested.
- State that you will review the policy annually to make sure it is still relevant.

Q6.2 – Does the relevant section of your organisation have an Environmental Management System (EMS) certified by a UKAS, ANAB or equivalent accredited certifying body?

An Environmental Management System (EMS) describes how an organisation manages its environmental impacts in a systematic, planned and documented manner to reduce negative impacts on the environment and encourage positive benefits.

An EMS may be certified under a standard such as ISO 14001, EMAS, STEM Gold, or the Acorn Scheme. If you have a certified EMS, please forward your certificate and Aspects Register.

If you don't have a certified EMS, you can answer this question by:

- 1) Making a list of all the activities your organisation does that have a potential impact on the environment - you should consider including social and economic impacts too. The areas listed in the guidance for Q6.1 above may be a useful starting point.
- 2) Your list may have a large number of activities on it, so you need to decide which ones have the largest potential impact and create a shortlist. Most organisations end up with a list of ten to fifteen activities on which to focus their efforts.
- 3) For each activity on your shortlist, say what you are doing to reduce negative impacts or environmental risk or to encourage positive benefits. Include objectives, targets and specific actions being taken.
- 4) If possible, you should set realistic timescales for achieving your objectives and include periodic review points to monitor progress.

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