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CESD Procurement Policies and Procedures

Center for Economic and Social Development (CESD)

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This Policy was approved by the CESD Board on November 12, 2021 and approved by Dr. Vugar Bayramov, the Chairman of the center.

POLICY

1. Purpose of procurement standards. The purpose of these standards is to establish procedures for the Center for Economic and Social Development (CESD) for the procurement of supplies and other expendable property, equipment, real property and other services.

2. Code of conduct. No employee, officer, or agent shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract if a real or apparent conflict of interest would be involved. Such a conflict would arise when the employee, officer, or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein, has a financial or other interest in the firm selected for an award. The officers, employees, and agents of CESD neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors, or parties to sub agreements except for where the financial interest is not substantial or the gift is an unsolicited item of nominal value. Members of CESD's board of directors shall comply with all relevant fiduciary duties, including those governing conflicts of interest, when they vote upon matters related to procurement contracts in which they have a direct or indirect financial or personal interest. Officers, employees, directors, and agents of CESD shall be subject to disciplinary actions for violations of these standards.

3. Competition. All procurement transactions shall be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open and free competition. CESD shall be alert to organizational conflicts of interest as well as noncompetitive practices among contractors that may restrict or eliminate competition or otherwise restrain trade. In order to ensure objective contractor performance and eliminate unfair competitive advantage, contractors that develop or draft specifications, requirements, statements of work, invitations for bids and/or requests for proposals shall be excluded from competing for such procurements. Awards shall be made to the bidder or offer or whose bid or offer is responsive to the solicitation and is most advantageous to CESD, price (the first indicator), quality and other factors considered. Solicitations shall clearly set forth all requirements that the bidder or offer or shall fulfill in order for the bid or offer to be evaluated by CESD. Any and all bids or offers may be rejected when it is in CESD's interest to do so. In all procurement CESD shall avoid practices that are restrictive of competition. These include but are not limited to:

- (a) Placing unreasonable requirements on firms in order for them to qualify to do business,
- (b) Requiring unnecessary experience and excessive bonding,
- (c) Noncompetitive pricing practices between firms or between affiliated companies,

- (d) Noncompetitive awards to consultants that are on retainer contracts,
- (e) Organizational conflicts of interest,
- (f) 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
- (g) Any arbitrary action in the procurement process.

4. Scope

The CESD Procurement Policy and Procedures (Procurement Policy) is deemed to structure CESD's purchasing processes and sourcing strategies to ensure that the services and goods we acquire are the result of transparent, objective, time- and cost-effective decision making and risk management. This Policy is rooted in CESD's members' commitment to continuous and performance-driven improvement and benchmarking. This Procurement Policy applies to all CESD staff, managers, directors and officers as well as any agent(s) for CESD seeking to acquire, acquiring and/or managing ongoing contractual relationships for the provision of services and/or goods to or on behalf of CESD under the condition of involvement. It is not a box ticking exercise, but rather implies careful consideration at all stages of the procurement process, including before and after. Adhering to this Policy is mandatory; violations may result in disciplinary action. This Policy may be shared with potential suppliers, donors and external partners, and incorporated into any resulting contractual relationship.

5. Confidentiality

This Procurement Policy applies to all acquisitions of goods/services at ISO. All purchases (and perhaps even most) will not need to go through a formal tender process but will remain subject to this Procurement Policy. To evaluate when a tender process is needed is written below. Adhering to this Policy will be the responsibility of the relevant business unit seeking to acquire the goods/services, and, as required or requested, in consultation with the Procurement Manager or Financial Services. While this Policy may be shared with potential bidders and donors, several aspects of the procurement process are confidential. Offers or tenders received from applicants are strictly confidential to CESD and should not be shared with potential or actual applicants in order to ensure fair and unbiased competition. The results of any offer or tender may be shared directly with the applicant only, including a summary as to why it was not selected. Record-keeping will be of utmost importance for accounting and auditing reasons

6. Methods of Procurement to be followed.

(h) Procurement by small purchase procedures. Small purchase procedures are those relatively simple and informal procurement methods for securing services, supplies, or other property that do not cost more than the "Simplified Acquisition Threshold" (currently set at \$100,000) and where procurement by sealed bid is not required. If small purchase procedures are used, price or rate quotations shall be obtained from an adequate number of qualified sources to insure that the selection process is competitive in accordance with these policies.

(i) Procurement by sealed bids (formal advertising). Bids are publicly solicited and a firm-fixed-price contract (lump sum or unit price) is awarded to the responsible bidder whose bid, conforming to all the material terms and conditions of the invitation for bids, is the lowest in price.

(i) The sealed bid method is the preferred method for procuring construction if the following conditions are present:

(A) A complete, adequate, and realistic specification or purchase description is available;

(B) Two or more responsible bidders are willing and able to compete effectively and for the business; and

(C) The procurement lends itself to a firm fixed price contract and the selection of the successful bidder can be made principally on the basis of price.

(ii) If sealed bids are used, the following requirements apply:

(A) The invitation for bids will be publicly advertised and bids shall be solicited from an adequate number of known suppliers, providing them sufficient time prior to the date set for opening the bids;

(B) The invitation for bids, which will include any specifications and pertinent attachments, shall define the items or services in order for the bidder to properly respond;

(C) All bids will be publicly opened at the time and place prescribed in the invitation for bids;

(D) A firm fixed-price contract award will be made in writing to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder. Where specified in bidding documents, factors such as discounts, transportation cost, and life cycle costs shall be considered in determining which bid is lowest. Payment discounts will only be used to determine the low bid when prior experience indicates that such discounts are usually taken advantage of; and

(E) Any or all bids may be rejected if there is a sound documented reason.

(j) Procurement by competitive proposals. The technique of competitive proposals is normally conducted with more than three sources submitting an offer, and either a fixed- price or cost-reimbursement type contract is awarded. It is generally used when conditions are not appropriate for the use of sealed bids or small purchase procedures. If this method is used, the following requirements apply:

(i) Requests for proposals will be publicized and identify all evaluation factors and their relative importance. Any response to publicized requests for proposals shall be honored to the maximum extent practical;

(ii) Proposals will be solicited from an adequate number of qualified sources;

(iii) CESD shall evaluate responses to its solicitations and select awardees in accordance the procedures outlined in section 5 below ("Procurement Procedures")

(iv) Awards will be made to the responsible firm whose proposal is most advantageous to CESD with price (first indicator) and other factors considered; and

(v) CESD may use the competitive proposal procedures for qualifications- based procurement of architectural/engineering (A/E) professional services whereby competitors' qualifications are evaluated and the most qualified competitor is selected, subject to negotiation of fair and reasonable compensation. A procurement process where price is not to be used as a stated selection factor can only be used in procurement of A/E professional services. It cannot be used to purchase other types of although A/E firms are a potential source to perform the proposed effort.

(k) Procurement by noncompetitive proposals is procurement through

solicitation of a proposal from only one source, or after solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate.

- (i) Procurement by noncompetitive proposals may be used only when the award of a contract is infeasible under small purchase procedures,

sealed bids or competitive proposals and one of the following circumstances applies:

- (A) The item is available only from a single source;
 - (B) The public exigency or emergency for the requirement will not permit a delay resulting from competitive solicitation;
 - (C) The funding source specifically authorizes the use of noncompetitive proposals; or
 - (D) After solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate.
- (ii) Cost analysis, i.e., verifying the proposed cost data, the projections of the data, and the evaluation of the specific elements of costs and profits, is required.
- (iii) When using a noncompetitive process CESD normally would be expected to submit the proposed procurement to the relevant funding source for pre-award.

7. Procurement procedures.

- (I) All procurement by CESD shall comply, at a minimum, with the requirements of subsections (i), (ii), and (iii) below:
- (i) CESD avoids purchasing unnecessary items.
 - (ii) Where appropriate, an analysis is made of lease and purchase alternatives to determine which would be the most economical and practical procurement.
 - (iii) Solicitations for goods and services provide for all of the following.
 - (A) A clear and accurate description of the technical requirements for the material, product or service to be procured. In competitive procurements, such a description shall not contain features that unduly restrict competition.
 - (B) Requirements that must be fulfilled and all other factors to be used in evaluating proposal submitted in response to solicitations.
 - (C) A description, whenever practicable, of technical

requirements in terms of functions to be performed or performance required, including the range of acceptable characteristics or minimum acceptable standards.

(D) When relevant, the specific features of "brand name or

equal" descriptions that are to be included in responses submitted to solicitation.

(E) The acceptance, to the extent practicable and economically feasible, of products and services dimensioned in the metric system of measurement.

(F) Preference, to the extent practicable and economically feasible, for products and services that conserve natural resources and protect the environment and are energy efficient.

(m) Positive efforts shall be made by CESD to utilize small businesses, minority- owned firms, and women's business enterprises, whenever possible. CESD shall take all of the following steps to further this goal.

(i) Ensure that small businesses, minority-owned firms, and women's business enterprises are used to the fullest extent practicable.

(ii) Make information on forthcoming opportunities available and arrange time frames for purchases and contracts to encourage and facilitate participation by small businesses, minority-owned firms, and women's business enterprises.

(iii) Consider in the contract process whether firms competing for larger contracts intend to subcontract with small businesses, minority- owned firms, and women's business enterprises.

(iv) Encourage, when practical, contracting with consortiums of small businesses, minority-owned firms and women's business enterprises when a contract is too large for one of these firms to handle individually.

(n) The type of procuring instruments used (e.g., fixed price contracts, cost reimbursable contracts, purchase orders, and incentive contracts) shall be determined by CESD but shall be appropriate for the particular procurement and for promoting the best interest of the program or project involved. The "cost-plus-a-percentage-of- cost" or "percentage of construction cost" methods of contracting shall not be used.

(o) Contracts shall be made only with responsible contractors who possess the potential ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of the proposed procurement. Consideration shall be given to such matters as contractor integrity, record of past performance, financial and technical resources or accessibility to other necessary resources.

8 Cost and price analysis.

Some form of cost or price analysis shall be made and documented in the procurement

files in connection with every procurement action above \$500 in value. Price analysis may be accomplished in various ways, including the comparison of price quotations submitted, market prices and similar indicia, together with discounts. Cost analysis is the review and evaluation of each element of cost to determine reasonableness, allocability and allowability.

4. Procurement records - Procurement records and files for purchases in excess of the small purchase threshold (currently \$25,000) shall include the following at a minimum: (a) basis for contractor selection, (b) justification for lack of competition when competitive bids or offers are not obtained, and (c) basis for award cost or price.

5. Contract administration. A system for contract administration shall be maintained to ensure contractor conformance with the terms, conditions and specifications of the contract and to ensure adequate and timely follow up of all purchases. CESD shall evaluate contractor performance and document, as appropriate, whether contractors have met the terms, conditions and specifications of the contract.

6. Contract provisions. CESD shall include, in addition to provisions to define a sound and complete agreement, the following provisions in all contracts. The following provisions shall also be applied to subcontracts.

(a) Contracts in excess of the Simplified Acquisition Threshold shall contain contractual provisions or conditions that allow for administrative, contractual, or legal remedies in instances in which a contractor violates or breaches the contract terms, and provide for such remedial actions as may be appropriate.

(b) All contracts in excess of the Simplified Acquisition Threshold shall contain suitable provisions for termination by CESD, including the manner by which termination shall be effected and the basis for settlement. In addition, such contracts shall describe conditions under which the contract may be terminated for default as well as conditions where the contract may be terminated because of circumstances beyond the control of the contractor.

(c) For contracts dealing with construction or facility improvements CESD shall comply with all requirements imposed by its funding sources (and the government regulations applicable to those funding sources) with regard to construction bid guarantees, performance bonds, and payment bonds.

(d) All negotiated contracts (except those for less than the Simplified Acquisition Threshold) awarded by CESD shall include a provision to the effect that CESD shall have access to any books, documents, papers and records of the contractor which are directly pertinent to a specific program for the purpose of making audits, examinations, excerpts and transcriptions.