



Good Practices for Developing Specifications

It is good practice to develop robust specifications. Some guidelines on how to achieve this are provided below:

- State the requirement clearly, concisely and logically in functional and performance terms unless specific technical requirements are needed.
- Include enough information for Suppliers to identify what is required and to cost it accordingly.
- Provide equal opportunity for all potential Suppliers to offer goods which satisfy the user's needs, including alternative solutions.
- Do not over-specify requirements as this might limit the number of responses.
- Do not include unnecessary features that might prevent some Suppliers from offering.
- Indicate requirements regarding delivery and after sales service etc.
- Whenever possible, indicate the final use (e.g. pipes: for construction of buildings, for water supply, gas supply etc).
- Do not allow the product requested to be covered by sole patent rights.
- Challenge the requisitioner if they request one particular product brand or manufacturer. Ask for valid reasons as they should be prepared to accept any brand that fully meets the specifications and requirements.
- For technical equipment, with specifications originating from a particular manufacturer or brand provided by a requisitioner ready to accept other manufacturers or brands, neutralise and make the specifications generic to allow for similar products of other brands. Check specifications of products originating from other known Suppliers to ensure that the minimum requirements included in the invitation to bid will allow other Suppliers to quote as well.
- For goods or equipment not previously procured and lacking specifications from the requisitioner, ask Suppliers commonly used for similar equipment, to provide their specifications as input for drafting the specifications with acceptance by the requisitioner. Buyers should be careful not to reveal too much information to the contacted Supplier in order not to give a potential advantage to this Supplier. For example, do not reveal the intention to issue an invitation to bid very soon, do not reveal the country of destination, the quantity to be purchased, etc.
- Where there is a lack of specifications, it may be challenging to define what is important for the goods and equipment. When such a situation occurs, there are several potential options:
 - Consult with colleagues who have experience and background within the specific area and who will be able to guide the requisitioner to define what is required.
 - Check the internet.
 - Consult existing brochures and catalogues.

- Consult with Suppliers or manufacturers specialized in the type of products. However, be careful not to reveal too much advanced information (see paragraph above)
- In exceptional cases, use consultants to help prepare specifications.