



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE	
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Contact Person/Department Superintendent of Business	Identification BU-3016

PROCUREMENT OF GOODS AND SERVICES

1.0 PURPOSE

The Board recognizes the need for all purchasing related activities to be seen to be open, fair and transparent and for all individuals involved with purchasing to act, and be seen to act, with integrity and professionalism. The Board will seek to obtain value for money and quality service delivery through standardized purchasing processes which will ensure that resources are used in an efficient, effective manner and which provides for appropriate accountability. The Board also believes in purchasing Canadian products and environmentally appropriate products where possible, and that products be manufactured under ethical, safe and healthy labour conditions.

2.0 REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

- 2.1 Relevant sections of Education and Purchasing Statutes and Regulations of Ontario include:
 - 2.1.1 The Education Act: (S) 217 (1), (2), (3), (4);
 - 2.1.2 Canadian Law of Competitive Process and Contract Law
 - 2.1.3 Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT)
 - 2.1.4 Ontario and Quebec Trade Agreement (OQTCA)
 - 2.1.5 Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)
 - 2.1.6 Records Managements and Retention Regulations
 - 2.1.7 Ontario Health and Safety Act
 - 2.1.8 Ontario Broader Public Sector Procurement Directive
 - 2.1.9 Ontario Broader Public Sector Expenses Directive
 - 2.1.10 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)

2.1.11 School Generated Funds Accounting Procedures Handbook

2.1.12 Ontario Association of School Business Officials' – Guidelines for School Generated Funds

2.2 Related Board Policies and Procedures are:

2.2.1 BU-3017 Petty Cash Procedure

2.2.2 BD-2002 Reimbursement of Trustee Expenses Procedure

2.2.3 BU-3501 Reimbursement of Expenses Procedure

2.2.4 BU-3061 Credit Cards Procedure

3.0 TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

3.1 PURCHASING

Purchasing involves the identification and recognition of the need for goods and services used by the various operations of Trillium Lakelands District School Board and the assurance of satisfaction of those needs at the lowest possible cost, consistent with the best quality available and the timeliness of delivery.

3.2 PURCHASE ORDER

The primary written communication tool between buyer and supplier. Purchase Orders used to convey offers to suppliers, accept offers from suppliers, to confirm already existing verbal contracts and to otherwise formalize a purchase transaction with a supplier.

3.3 COMPETITIVE PROCESS

Goods, equipment, and services must be acquired through a competitive process that ensures the best value for the funds expended to meet specific needs and promotes fair competition and impartial, equitable relationships.

3.4 REQUEST FOR QUOTATION (RFQ)

A written or verbal offer for price, specifically given upon request, and usually in competition with other vendors.

3.5 REQUEST FOR TENDER (RFT)

A formal written request for price submissions normally accompanied by generic descriptions, performance specifications and specific terms and conditions of supply. A request for tender may be sent to selected prequalified potential sources of supply based on supplier's capabilities.

3.6 REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

A solicitation of price proposal from qualified suppliers to supply goods or services or to provide alternate options or solutions to resolve an issue or a technical, professional or management problem.

3.7 “PIGGY BACK” CLAUSE

To join a competitive Tender or Proposal initiated by another Board, public service organization or a provincial ministry that has been recently awarded for goods and services that match the Board’s requirements.

3.8 BPS – Broader Public Sector

3.9 EMERGENCY

Circumstances or situations beyond anyone’s control which have the potential of affecting the health, life or safety of students or other personnel; resulting in undue financial losses or requiring the prompt restoration of services to minimize interruption to the system.

4.0 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

4.1 CODE OF ETHICS

4.1.1 PERSONAL INTEGRITY AND PROFESSIONALISM

All individuals involved with purchasing or other supply chain-related activities must act, and be seen to act, with integrity and professionalism. Honesty, care and due diligence must be integral to all supply chain activities within and between Broader Public Sector (BPS) organizations, suppliers and other stakeholders. Respect must be demonstrated for each other and for the environment. Confidential information must be safeguarded. Participants must not engage in any activity that may create, or appear to create, a conflict of interest, such as accepting gifts or favours, providing preferential treatment, or publicly endorsing suppliers or products.

4.1.2 ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Supply chain activities must be open and accountable. In particular, contracting and purchasing activities must be fair, transparent and conducted with a view to obtaining the best value for public money. All participants must ensure that public sector resources are used in a responsible, efficient and effective manner.

4.1.3 COMPLIANCE AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

All individuals involved in purchasing or other supply chain-related activities must comply with this code of ethics, and the laws of Canada and Ontario. All individuals should continuously work to improve supply chain policies and procedures, to improve their supply chain knowledge and skill levels, and to share leading practices.

4.2 SUPPLY CHAIN GUIDELINES – MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

The Broader Public Service (BPS) Procurement Directive provides specific direction on how the organization is to conduct sourcing, contracting and purchasing activities, including approval segregation and limits, competitive and non-competitive procurement, purchasing, contract awarding, conflict of interest and bid protest procedures.

The BPS Procurement Directive incorporates 25 mandatory requirements that must be followed by BPS recipients, which includes school boards. These requirements are an integral part of this procedure and are attached as Appendix 5.1.

4.3 SEGREGATION OF DUTIES

The segregation of duties is an essential control within the purchasing-to-pay process. It ensures the integrity of the process by reducing exposure to inappropriate, unauthorized or unlawful expenditures.

This internal control mechanism prevents any one person from controlling the entire purchasing process by segregating approvals for the key stages of the supply chain process.

The following Segregation of Duties framework will apply to the Board's Procurement Process:

Segregation of Duties

Roles	Explanation	Who
Requisition	Authorize the Purchasing Department to place an order	Individual, school, or department requesting the product or service
Budget	Authorize that funding is available to cover the cost of the order	School (Principal) or Departmental budget holder
Commitment	Authorize release of the order to the supplier under agreed-upon contract terms	Purchasing Department
Receipt	Authorize that the order was physically received, correct and complete	Individual, school, or department receiving the goods
Payment	Authorize release of payment to the supplier	Accounts Payable, Signing Officers

4.4 APPROVAL AUTHORITY

4.4.1 The Purchasing Department shall be responsible for the procurement of goods and services.

4.4.2 Purchases initiated without using an approved purchase order are considered unauthorized purchases and will remain the obligation of the person, school or department that initiated the purchase. School Principals and Superintendents will be informed of purchases not complying with board policy.

Any invoices received for unauthorized purchases will be returned to the person, school or department who initiated the order and the Board may not pay for such invoices. Payment for these invoices will require the approval of the Superintendent for that school or department.

4.4.3 Board staff must seek the necessary approval authority for all procurements prior to conducting the procurement. Approvals for procurements must be based on the total estimated value of the procurement, including any agreed upon renewals.

The positions and purchasing authority levels for all items purchased by the Board are outlined in the following schedule:

Approval Authorities

Total Purchase Amount	Delegated Purchasing Authority Level
Up to \$10,000	Principal / Manager
\$10,000 - \$50,000	District Principal / Purchasing Supervisor / Supervisor of Construction / Coordinator
\$ 50,000 - \$ 250,000	Senior Manager
\$ 250,000 - \$ 1,000,000	Superintendent / Director of Education
\$ 1,000,000 - \$ 2,000,000	Any combination of two Superintendents or Director of Education
>\$2,000,000	The Board

4.5 PROCEDURES

4.5.1 All requests for goods and services are to be authorized by the employee having budget responsibility for the account to be charged. In the event of an emergency as described in Section 4.11 herein, written approval from the Superintendent and/or the Senior Manager of the department involved will be sufficient.

4.5.2 All purchase orders must be authorized by the Purchasing Supervisor in order to ensure compliance with all Board policies and procedures.

4.5.3 The make, model, colour or size of product will not be altered from that requested without consultation with the originator. The recommended supplier, however, may be changed at the discretion of the Purchasing Supervisor.

4.6 PETTY CASH

Petty cash funds will be provided to facilitate procurement of goods and services up to \$300. The operation of these funds is set out in administrative procedure BU-3017 Petty Cash.

4.7 LIMITATIONS

The following limits will apply to purchasing procedures (orders cannot be divided into multiple orders to circumvent the approval requirements or procurement limits):

- 4.7.1 a) For purchase orders issued by Facility Services having an estimated value of up to \$10,000 including all applicable taxes, formal competitive quotes are not required.
- b) For all other purchase orders having an estimated value of \$300 to \$5,000 including all applicable taxes, formal competitive quotes are not required.
- 4.7.2 a) For purchase orders issued by Facility Services having an estimated value of \$10,001 to \$100,000, three written quotes shall be obtained and The Request for Quotation number must appear on the purchase order.
- b) For all other purchase orders having an estimated value of \$5,001 to \$25,000, three verbal quotes shall be obtained. Where quotations are obtained, the names and prices of all suppliers contacted will be noted and filed with the Accounts Payable copy of the Purchase Order.
- 4.7.3 For purchase orders (with the exception of those issued by Facility Services) having an estimated value of \$25,001 to \$100,000, a minimum of three written quotations shall be obtained by the Purchasing Department. The Request for Quotation number must appear on the purchase order.
- 4.7.4 The Purchasing Supervisor in conjunction with the originator of the request shall consider the following methods for the purchase of goods and services, where the estimated value is in excess of \$100,000:

- a) Where the required goods or services can be specified, a Request for Tender (RFT) will be issued and is awarded to the lowest price quoted. The award of the tender will be contingent on the Board being satisfied as to the suitability of the goods and/or services requested and in consideration of the capacity, integrity, and financial ability of the Bidder to satisfy the tender, as well as any previous experience the Bidder has with the Board.
- b) Where the need can be specified rather than the specific product or service to fill the need, a Request for Proposal (RFP) shall be issued. The proposal may include the bidders be pre-qualified.
- c) Where consulting services are being requested, a Request for Proposal (RFP) shall be issued.
- d) Purchase by negotiation shall apply only when any of the following conditions exist:
 - i) Due to market conditions, goods or services are in limited or short supply;
 - ii) There is only one known source of the goods and services;
 - iii) Two or more identical low bids have been received;
 - iv) The lowest bid substantially exceeds the estimated cost of goods or services;
 - v) All bids fail to comply with the specifications, tender terms and conditions and it is impractical to recall tenders;
 - vi) Purchase of an item where compatibility with an existing product, service or program is an overriding consideration;
 - vi) When only one bid is received through the tendering process.

4.8 BID PROCESS

- 4.8.1 Where the need for a Request for Tender (RFT) or Request for Proposal (RFP) has been identified in accordance with the above criteria, the Purchasing Supervisor will advertise the request by placing advertisements in a newspaper of general circulation or on an acceptable electronic tendering website.

4.8.2 Tenders and Quotations shall be opened in the presence of the Purchasing Supervisor, or other individual designated by the Senior Manager of Finance, and a Recording Secretary. The originator may also choose to attend the opening. Bid amounts will be recorded on a bid summary sheet; sureties and other requirements will be confirmed. All tenders received for goods and services, shall be tabulated, analyzed and awarded by the Purchasing Supervisor in consultation with the originator.

4.8.3 For procurements valued at \$100,000 or more, unsuccessful bidders will have an opportunity to schedule a debriefing session by the Purchasing Supervisor. The debriefing will provide the bidder with a critical review of the unsuccessful proposal/tender, and of what, in the opinion of the Board, were its particular strengths and weaknesses.

4.9 PURCHASING FROM EMPLOYEES

The purchasing of goods, books, equipment etc. from employees is forbidden. Section 217 of the Education Act States:

“No teacher, supervisory officer or other employee of a board or of the Ministry shall, for compensation of any kind other than his or her salary as such employee, promote, offer for sale or sell, directly or indirectly, any book or other teaching or learning materials, equipment, furniture, stationery or other article to any board, provincial school or teachers’ college, or to any pupil enrolled therein.”

This subsection does not apply to a teacher, Supervisory Officer or any other employee in respect of a book or other teaching or learning materials of which he or she is an author when the only compensation that he or she receives in respect thereof is a fee or royalty.

4.10 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A “Conflict of Interest” exists where the decisions made and/or the actions taken by the employee in the exercise of the employee’s duties could be affected by:

- The employee’s personal, financial or business interests; or
- The personal, financial or business interests of relatives, friends or associates of an employee.

No employee or close relative of an employee of Trillium Lakelands District School Board shall engage in any type of buying or selling directly to the Board for compensation of any kind.

4.11 EMERGENCY PURCHASING

In case of an emergency, the Board has the authority to acquire goods and services in the most expedient manner possible regardless of the amount. The Superintendent and/or the Senior Manager of the department will be informed of any emergency and will ensure that goods and services are procured in a timely manner to ensure that all Board requirements are achieved.

Documentation explaining the nature of the situation and the actions taken will be forwarded to the Purchasing Department.

4.12 CANADIAN PREFERENCE

The Board shall maintain a Canadian preference policy. All goods and services shall be purchased using non-discriminatory practices. Where feasible and cost effective and where all criteria being equal, the Board will give preference to Canadian products and services.

4.13 CO-OPERATIVE PURCHASING

The Board shall encourage co-operative purchasing with other school boards and other units of the Public Sector or utilize a “piggy-back clause” to existing Ministry or government goods and services contracts or other co-operatives, whenever it is in the best interest of the Board.

4.14 DOCUMENTATION

All acquisition processes shall be documented by the Purchasing Department, or originating department, and kept on file in the Purchasing Department, or Plant and Maintenance Department, whichever is applicable, in accordance with the Records Management and Retention regulations as stipulated by law.

4.15 SPECIAL FUNDING/BULK PURCHASE

When special or additional funding (from all and any sources) for approved projects or programs has been allocated, the Superintendent, Principal or Manager will consult with the Purchasing Supervisor prior to any request for purchase, pricing or product demonstration.

4.16 ENVIRONMENTAL

The Board supports the use of environmentally sustainable products and services. Where feasible and cost effective, and all criteria being equal, the Board will give preference to environmentally sustainable products and services.

4.17 HOSPITALITY/GRATUITIES

Only the acceptance of infrequent and reasonable hospitality or business gifts of small intrinsic value is allowed for individuals. The frequency and nature of gifts or hospitality accepted should not be allowed whereby the recipient might be influenced or might be deemed by others to have been influenced in making a business decision as a consequence of accepting such hospitality or gift. The absence of actual and perceived influence is of particular importance leading up to and during the tendering and/or proposal process.

If any staff member is uncertain about favours and gratuities, he/she is to check with the Director as to whether the offer is deemed appropriate.

4.18 HEALTH AND SAFETY

All goods and services purchased must adhere to the Ontario Health and Safety Act of acquiring and maintaining Material Safety Data Sheets. Any goods and services purchased by an individual without the use of proper board procedures will become the obligation and liability of said individual.

All new purchases of tools, furniture and facilities will meet the current ergonomic principles and practices of the Board.

4.19 BUSINESS CREDIT CARDS

Business Credit Cards are issued to provide a convenient method of procuring and paying for low value goods and services by simplifying the procurement process, reducing vendor payment time and to meet the needs of our large geographical region.

4.20 GIFT CARDS/CERTIFICATES

The practice of purchasing and giving of gift cards/certificates is discouraged.

5.0 APPENDICES

5.1 Broader Public Sector Procurement Directive

5.2 Waiver of Competitive Process Form

BROADER PUBLIC SECTOR PROCUREMENT DIRECTIVE

Mandatory Requirements

1. Segregation of Duties

Organizations must segregate at least three of the five functional procurement roles: Requisition, Budgeting, Commitment, Receipt and Payment. Responsibilities for these roles must lie with different departments or, at a minimum, with different individuals.

Where it is not feasible to segregate these roles, (i.e., for smaller Organizations), adequate compensating controls approved by an external auditor must be put in place.

2. Approval Authority

- i) Organizations must establish an approval authority schedule (AAS) for procurement of goods and non-consulting services. The AAS must identify, for each of the functional procurement roles identified in Mandatory Requirement #1, authorities that are allowed to approve procurements for different dollar thresholds. The AAS must be approved by the board of directors of the Organization or its equivalent.

Prior to commencement, any procurement of goods and non-consulting services must be approved by an appropriate authority in accordance with the AAS of the Organization.

Prior to commencement, any non-competitive procurement of goods or non-consulting services must be approved by an authority one level higher than the AAS requirements for competitive procurement.

- ii) Prior to commencement, any procurement of consulting services must be approved in accordance with the Procurement Approval Authority Schedule for Consulting Services below.

Procurement Approval Authority Schedule (AAS) for Consulting Services		
Procurement Method	Procurement Value	Approval Authority
Invitational Competitive	\$0 up to but not including \$100,000	Organization's AAS for goods and non-consulting services
Open Competitive	Any value	Organization's AAS for goods and non-consulting services
Non-competitive*	\$0 up to but not including \$1,000,000	President, CEO or equivalent
	\$1,000,000 or more	Board of Directors or equivalent

*Exemption-based only

Organizations must not reduce the overall value of procurement (e.g., dividing a single procurement into multiple procurements) in order to circumvent the approval requirements of the organizational AAS or the Procurement AAS for Consulting Services.

3. Competitive Procurement Thresholds

Organizations must conduct an open competitive procurement process where the estimated value of procurement of goods or services is \$100,000 or more. The exemptions must be in accordance with the applicable trade agreements.

Organizations must competitively procure consulting services irrespective of value. The exemptions must be in accordance with the applicable trade agreements.

Goods, Non-Consulting Services and Construction		
Total Procurement Value	Means of Procurement	Recommended/Required
\$0 up to but not including \$100	Petty cash	Recommended
\$100 up to but not including \$3,000	Procurement card (P-card)	Recommended
\$3,000 up to but not including \$10,000	Purchase order	Recommended
\$10,000 up to but not including \$100,000	Invitational competitive procurement (minimum of three suppliers are invited to submit a bid)	Recommended
\$100,000 or more	Open competitive process	Required
Consulting Services		
Total Procurement Value	Means of Procurement	Recommended/Required
\$0 up to but not including \$100,000	Invitational or open competitive process	Required
\$100,000 or more	Open competitive process	Required

Organizations must not reduce the overall value of procurement (e.g., dividing a single procurement into multiple procurements) in order to circumvent procurement thresholds.

4. Information Gathering

Where results of informal supplier or product research are insufficient, formal processes such as a Request for Information (RFI) or Request for Expression of Interest (RFEI) may be used if warranted, taking into consideration the time and effort required to conduct them.

A response to RFI or RFEI must not be used to pre-qualify a potential supplier and must not influence the chances of the participating suppliers from becoming the successful proponent in any subsequent opportunity.

5. Supplier Pre-Qualification

The Request for Supplier Qualification (RFSQ) enables Organizations to gather information about supplier capabilities and qualifications in order to pre-qualify suppliers for an immediate product or service need or to identify qualified candidates in advance of expected future competitions.

Terms and conditions of the RFSQ document must contain language that disclaims any obligation of the Organization to call on any supplier to provide goods or services as a result of pre-qualification.

6. Posting Competitive Procurement Documents

Calls for open competitive procurements must be made through an electronic tendering system that is readily accessible by all Canadian suppliers.

7. Timelines for Posting Competitive Procurements

Organizations must provide suppliers a minimum response time of 15 calendar days for procurement of goods and services valued at \$100,000 or more.

Organizations must consider providing suppliers a minimum response time of 30 calendar days for procurements of high complexity, risk, and/or dollar value.

8. Bid Receipt

Bid submission date and closing time must be clearly stated in competitive procurement documents. Organizations must set the closing date of a competitive procurement process on a normal working day (Monday to Friday, excluding provincial and national holidays).

Submissions that are delivered after the closing time must be returned unopened.

9. Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation criteria must be developed, reviewed and approved by an appropriate authority prior to the commencement of the competitive procurement process.

Competitive procurement documents must clearly outline mandatory, rated, and other criteria that will be used to evaluate submissions, including weight of each criterion.

Mandatory criteria (e.g., technical standards) should be kept to a minimum to ensure that no bid is unnecessarily disqualified.

Maximum justifiable weighting must be allocated to the price/cost component of the evaluation criteria.

All criteria must comply with Mandatory Requirement #14, Non-Discrimination, of the Directive.

The evaluation criteria are to be altered only by means of addendum to the competitive procurement documents.

Organizations may request suppliers to provide alternative strategies or solutions as a part of their submission. Organizations must establish criteria to evaluate alternative strategies or solutions prior to commencement of the competitive procurement process. Alternative strategies or solutions must not be considered unless they are explicitly requested in the competitive procurement documents.

10. Evaluation Process Disclosure

Competitive procurement documents must fully disclose the evaluation methodology and process to be used in assessing submissions, including the method of resolving a tie score.

Competitive procurement documents must state that submissions that do not meet the mandatory criteria will be disqualified.

11. Evaluation Team

Competitive procurement processes require an evaluation team responsible for reviewing and rating the compliant bids.

Evaluation team members must be made aware of the restrictions related to utilization and distribution of confidential and commercially sensitive information collected through the competitive procurement process and refrain from engaging in activities that may create or appear to create a conflict of interest.

Evaluation team members must sign a conflict-of-interest declaration and non-disclosure of confidential information agreement.

12. Evaluation Matrix

Each evaluation team member must complete an evaluation matrix, rating each of the submissions. Records of evaluation scores must be retained for audit purposes.

Evaluators must ensure that everything they say or write about submissions is fair, factual, and fully defensible.

13. Winning Bid

The submission that receives the highest evaluation score and meets all mandatory requirements set out in the competitive procurement document must be declared the winning bid.

14. Non-Discrimination

Organizations must not discriminate or exercise preferential treatment in awarding a contract to a supplier as a result of a competitive procurement process.

15. Executing the Contract

The agreement between the Organization and the successful supplier must be formally defined in a signed written contract before the provision of supplying goods or services commences.

Where an immediate need exists for goods or services, and the Organization and the supplier are unable to finalize the contract as described above, an interim purchase order may be used. The justification of such decision must be documented and approved by the appropriate authority.

16. Establishing the Contract

The contract must be finalized using the form of agreement that was released with the procurement documents.

In circumstances where an alternative procurement strategy has been used (i.e., a form of agreement was not released with the procurement document), the agreement between the Organization and the successful supplier must be defined formally in a signed written contract before the provision of supplying goods or services commences.

17. Termination Clauses

All contracts must include appropriate cancellation or termination clauses. Organizations should seek legal advice on the development of such clauses.

When conducting complex procurements, organizations should consider, as appropriate, the use of contract clauses that permit cancellation or termination at critical project life-cycle stages.

18. Term of Agreement Modifications

The term of the agreement and any options to extend the agreement must be set out in the competitive procurement documents. An approval by an appropriate authority must be obtained before executing any modifications to the term of agreement.

Extending the term of agreement beyond that set out in the competitive procurement document amounts to non-competitive procurement where the extension affects the value and/or stated deliverables of procurement.

19. Contract Award Notification

For procurements valued at \$100,000 or more, Organizations must post, in the same manner as the procurement documents were posted, contract award notification. The notification must be posted after the agreement between the successful supplier and the Organization was executed. Contract award notification must list the name of the successful supplier, agreement start and end dates, including any extension options.

20. Supplier Debriefing

For procurements valued at \$100,000 or more, Organizations must inform all unsuccessful suppliers about their entitlement to a debriefing. Organizations must allow unsuccessful suppliers 60 calendar days following the date of the contract award notification to request a debriefing.

21. Non-Competitive Procurement

i) Organizations should employ a competitive procurement process to achieve optimum value for money. It is recognized, however, that special circumstances may require Organizations to use non-competitive procurement.

Organizations may utilize non-competitive procurement only in situations outlined in the exemption, exceptions, or non-application clauses of the AIT or other trade agreements.

Prior to commencement of non-competitive procurement, supporting documentation must be completed and approved by an appropriate authority within the Organization.

ii) School board may utilize a non-competitive procurement process for the procurement of student home to school transportation services for the period July 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011.

22. Contract Management

Procurements and the resulting contracts must be managed responsibly and effectively.

Payments must be made in accordance with provisions of the contract. All invoices must contain detailed information sufficient to warrant payment. Any overpayments must be recovered in a timely manner.

Assignments must be properly documented. Supplier performance must be managed and documented, and any performance issues must be addressed. To manage disputes with suppliers throughout the life of the contract, Organizations should include a dispute resolution process in their contracts.

For services, organizations must:

- Establish clear terms of reference for the assignment. The terms should include objectives, background, scope, constraints, staff responsibilities, tangible deliverables, timing, progress reporting, approval requirements, and knowledge transfer requirements.
- Establish expense claim and reimbursement rules compliant with the Broader Public Sector Expenses Directive and ensure all expenses are claimed and reimbursed in accordance with these rules.
- Ensure that expenses are claimed and reimbursed only where the contract explicitly provides for reimbursement of expenses.

23. Procurement Records Retention

For reporting and auditing purposes, all procurement documentation, as well as any other pertinent information must be retained in a recoverable form for a period of seven years.

Organizations must have a written policy for handling, storing and maintaining the suppliers' confidential and commercially sensitive information.

24. Conflict of Interest

Organizations must monitor any conflict of interest that may arise as a result of the Members' of the Organization, advisors', external consultants', or suppliers' involvement with the Supply Chain Activities. Individuals involved with the Supply Chain Activities must declare actual or potential conflicts of interest. Where a conflict of interest arises, it must be evaluated and an appropriate mitigating action must be taken.

25. Bid Dispute Resolution

Competitive procurement documents must outline bid dispute resolution procedures to ensure that any dispute is handled in an ethical, fair, reasonable, and timely fashion. Bid dispute resolution procedures must comply with bid protest or dispute resolution procedures set out in the applicable trade agreements.

