

Selection Guideline

Cato Composites B.V.

Thermoplastic manufacturing equipment

European tendering procedure according to the competitive procedure with negotiation



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1 Introduction and the Assignment

This Selection Guideline contains information about the European tender of thermoplastic manufacturing equipment for Cato Composites B.V (Cato). Cato wishes to contract one (1) Supplier. In this document and the other Tender documents you will find more about what we want to achieve and why, and what we consider important in this regard. And, you will read exactly how we work and what the rules are.

We kindly invite you to submit an Request for Participation.

A number of crucial points of attention for you as a participant in the tender:

- We would like to cordially invite you in advance to participate in the information meeting as described in paragraph 2.2.2.
- Please pay close attention to the method for submitting your bid digitally via TenderNed. You are required to take specific steps in the system and confirm them using an SMS code, as outlined in paragraph 2.3.
- Keep an eye on the schedule and the deadlines relevant to you, such as submitting questions and your request for participation.
- **Communication about this tender will be exclusively via the Tender Platform. We will not process messages sent in any other way.**

1.1 Reason and context of the Tender

We operate in the thermoplastic composite (TPC) manufacturing industry and have received public funding for an investment in a pilot line for our TPC manufacturing process. One of the terms for spending this public funding is that we have to carry out a public tender.

To give more context, we have been invited by Oost NL to participate in the "Manufacturing of Next Material" (MNM) program, part of the Interreg VI Deutschland-Nederland framework, co-financed by the EU, MWIKE NRW, the Lower Saxony Ministry, and various Dutch provinces. The project, which was granted during the first quarter of 2023 and kicked off in November 2023, brings together German and Dutch innovation centers to tackle key challenges in materials technology. The end date of the program is November 2027.

These challenges focus on scaling up composite materials for test production, advancing 3D printing beyond prototypes, and developing production technology for smart materials like battery components. Cato Composites is leading Lighthouse Project 1, which aims to install a pilot line called Next TPC Manufacturing Solutions (Next TPMS) to develop production solutions for market-ready components. The project emphasizes using circular and/or biobased composite materials.

With this Tender, we invest in our production process with the goal of reducing cycle times and increasing energy efficiency of our production process and to achieve efficient cost of manufacturing.

1.2 The Contracting Authority

Cato Composites BV (Cato) was co-founded in 2008 by Joost van Lindert, who had previously co-founded Bond-Laminates GmbH, a leading manufacturer of TEPEX® thermoplastic composite materials. Cato's mission has been to provide OEM customers with advanced TPC manufacturing Solution for materials as well as components made from thermoplastic composite materials. The manufacturing solutions comprise tailored and refinement of materials, co-creation of applications with the OEM clients using TPC processes installed at Cato's Manufacturing Solution centre or cooperate with partners adding additional processes and capabilities.

From 2008 to 2012, Cato collaborated with Cato Composites AS in Norway, a subsidiary of Cato Ringstad AS, in developing and manufacturing thermoplastic composite parts. In 2012, after Bond-Laminates was sold to Lanxess, Cato acquired all equipment and technology from its Norwegian partner, relocating these assets to its facility in Rheden, Netherlands. This included automated production lines for military helmets and cell phone housings.

Since then, Cato has expanded its team, resources, and global customer base. The company specializes in providing TPC manufacturing Solutions for OEM clients going through the following stages and gates

- Use case analysis comprising costing, specification, co-creation of the components
- Conducting development and manufacturing of tooling, manufacturing the parts as well as validation those.
- Scaling-up the components to manufacturing level using DoE, quality control plan and development of specifications and capabilities.
- Manufacturing the TPC components or licensing of the TPC Manufacturing Solutions to OEM clients.

Cato is active in the field of Defense product like personal protective equipment for ballistic threats, Aerospace interior and structural components, applications for harvesting renewable energy or storing energy and sports and leisure components.

Cato aims to contribute to bring lightness to products, using recycled, biobased and circular (raw) materials as well as providing application solutions to harvest and store renewable energy.

1.3 Objectives

With the tender we hope to realize the following objectives.

Objective	Explanation
1. Thermoplastic composite sheet consolidation equipment	The new manufacturing equipment should be capable of consolidating thermoplastic composites effectively.
2. Low and High temperature profile	The new manufacturing equipment should be capable of heating across a wide temperature range, accommodating both low-temperature profiles from 160-240°C up to high temperatures up to 400–450°C.
3. Fast and efficient manufacturing cycles, with efficient energy consumption	The new manufacturing equipment should substantively reduce the cycle time and energy consumption of Cato's sheet manufacturing process. In addition, the manufacturing equipment should run as much automatically with the aim to reduce direct labor costs.
4. Seamless implementation	Cato wants to have a seamless implementation of the new manufacturing equipment into the current manufacturing process, so that the new equipment can be operating at full capacity as soon as possible. The manufacturing equipment will also be made available as a pilot line to 3 rd parties to conduct developments as intended in the MNM program.
5. Quality manufacturing equipment	The sheet consolidation equipment can: 1 – reach high temperature and is able to consolidate material which require high temperature profile, 2 – have low heating and cooling cycle time and 3 – be energy efficient.
6. Suppliers must take into account that the equipment is partially made possible by a subsidy budget of €600,000.	This budget should guide the proposed solutions but does not necessarily constitute a strict price ceiling. Cato reserves the right to evaluate proposals that exceed this budget, provided they offer significant added value or align with the project's objectives. This will be further elaborated upon during the bidding phase.

1.4 Scope of the Assignment

The assignment includes the following activities:

- (1) Delivery of an energy efficient state-of-the-art thermoplastic sheet consolidation equipment to the location of Cato Composites. The manufacturing equipment includes:
 - a. Handling a minimum sheet size of 1.100 x 1.000 mm
 - b. Focus on the lowest possible cycle times and as much automation as possible, designed for processing thermoplastic composite sheets with low energy consumption.
 - c. Handling a variety of materials for composite manufacturing, where the fibers include Carbon, Glass, Aramid, Polymer and natural fibers such as Kenaf. The matrices used in combination with these fibers are:
 - Low-temperature profile materials, such as Polypropylene (PP)
 - High-temperature materials, such as Polyphenylene Sulfide (PPS) and Low Melt Polyaryletherketone (LM PAEK) and PEEK
 - High-shrinkage materials, such as Self-Reinforced Polypropylene (SRPP), for which you may offer a separate clamp setup.
 - d. Heating technologies such as induction heating, oil heating or electrical heating. Other forms of heating are also possible, provided they align with the stated objectives of Cato Composites.
 - e. Material handling of large lay-ups of sheets We are thinking at this moment having these two options for the automation:

Option	Input	Output	Comments
1.	Fixed stack of lay-ups separated by separating paper.	Stack of consolidated sheets. No separation needed.	Preferred solution
2.	Semi-manual insert of fixed stack into press	Semi-manual stacking of sheets.	'light version'

- (2) Implementation of the manufacturing equipment, including installation and integration of automation into the manufacturing process of Cato Composites.
- (3) Rugged testing of the manufacturing equipment – in collaboration with Cato Composites – leading to an accepted delivery (Commissioning (1) in supplier house and (2) in Cato house) to Cato Composites.
- (4) Training of personnel on maintenance and operation of the manufacturing equipment.
- (5) A light form of second-line support and maintenance for the manufacturing equipment after accepted delivery, provided through a Service Level Agreement. The supplier is obligated to offer this upon request from Cato Composites. A separate service level agreement (SLA) will need to be established for this purpose. In addition, regular maintenance of the manufacturing equipment is the responsibility of Cato Composites.

The following activities are related to the assignment but are optional and may be procured at the discretion of the Contracting Authority:

- (6) The delivery of a press as part of the thermoplastic sheet consolidation workflow, within the budget of Cato Composites. If the supplier's solution exceeds the budget threshold or for any other valid reason, the supplier may use the existing press of Cato Composites. During the bidding phase, this will be further clarified. One possible approach the contracting authority may take is to set a cost threshold to which bids must conform. The equipment should be able to process materials in good quality within a certain cycle time achieving a certain capacity.

E.g. Cato will specify two materials for the commissioning of the materials:

- One is a SRPP material, to be processed at 60 - 160 – 60 °C cycle within 2 minutes. These materials have the tendency to shrink which should be avoided and the capacity of the equipment manufacturing SrPP materials will be 54.000 sheets annually. This material is leading for the equipment specification in terms of cycle times for the low temperature profile.
- The other materials is a Carbon/PPS materials to be processed at 100 – 360 – 100 °C cycle. The cycle time of processing this materials need to be indicated by the supplier.
- Correspondingly, This material is leading for the equipment specification in terms of cycle times for the high temperature profile.

1.4.1 Estimated size of the assignment

The awarded budget for the assignment is a € 600.000 excluding VAT, which is based on the public fund amount supplemented by Cato Composites' own contribution. 90% of this budget must be spent before the November 16th, 2025. Cato Composites may increase the budget depending on the quality of the offers.

Beyond that, Cato Composites reserves the right to request support and maintenance from the supplier, which will be handled through a separate budget.

Although the entire budget may be used, it is not the goal to spend it all. The budget is partly financed with public funds, which are taxpayer money. The contractor is aware of this, making it crucial to spend the funds responsibly. The budget should be used for its intended purpose and remain relevant to the stated objectives.

1.5 Contract form

Cato Composites wishes to contract one by means of an agreement. The intended start of the agreement is June 2025.

The agreement has a fixed delivery deadline for the manufacturing equipment, which can be proposed by the supplier, but must fall within a boundary set by Cato Composites (this will be shared in the bidding phase). The delivery and implementation must be accepted by Cato Composites within this timeframe. Acceptance means that the manufacturing equipment functions according to all conditions set out in the tender documents, and that a workable solution has been delivered by the contractor, fully integrated into Cato Composites' workflow.

This is followed by a period, during which the contracting authority can request support and maintenance. The contracting authority can, in mutual agreement, enter into a separate maintenance contract with the contractor. Any support and maintenance resulting from defects and/or errors that were required in the tender documents are the responsibility of the contractor.

1.6 Terms and Conditions of Purchase

We declare the general purchasing conditions of the Dutch government regarding purchasing and supply contracts (ARIV-2018) applicable.

2 Course of the Tender

2.1 Tender procedure

We follow a competitive procedure with negotiation in accordance with the Public Procurement Act 2012. As criterion for awarding the contract, we use the most economically advantageous bid based on the best price-quality ratio.

The competitive procedure with negotiation consists of a selection phase and a bidding phase with negotiation. During the selection phase we **select a maximum of six (6) Interested Parties** based on the Requests for participation. These selected parties are then invited to submit a first Bid during the bidding phase on the basis of the Award Guidelines.

In the competitive procedure with negotiation there is a first selection on the basis of suitability of the Interested Parties. To limit administrative burdens for both the market as well as Cato Composites B.V. we will not select more than 6 Interested Parties to submit a first Bid.

We reserve the right to commence the bidding phase with fewer than six parties.

2.1.1 Explanation of the competitive procedure with negotiation

The competitive procedure with negotiation consists of the following steps:

Selection phase (THIS PHASE)

Publication of the Selection Guideline (this document)



Q&A Phase (one round of questions and answers)



Information meeting (Please note: make sure to register for this in time!)



Submit the request for participation



Check, verify and judge the requests for participation



Selection decision



Bidding phase with dialogue

Publication of the Award Guideline (invitation to first Bid)



Q&A Phase (first round of questions and answers)



Submission of a first Bid by Bidders



Feedback and dialogue with suppliers regarding their first Bid



Q&A Phase (second round of questions and answers)



Submission of the final Bid by Bidders



Judgement of the Bids



Award decision



Award the contract

The bidding phase is further elaborated on in Chapter 5.

2.2 Selection Phase

Below, the most important information regarding the selection phase is provided. Additionally, Annex E with further details about the selection phase and process conditions is included. Please read carefully!

2.2.1 Planning of the selection phase

The planning of the selection phase is as follows. The planning is indicative; you cannot derive any rights from it. We reserve the right to change the planning and to stop or suspend the Tender. If the schedule below does not match the schedule in the dashboard on TenderNed, the schedule on TenderNed takes precedence.

Phase	Date
Start Selection Phase	
Publication of tender documents	Friday December 13 th , 2024
Christmas holiday	December 21 st , 2024 – January 5 th , 2025
Deadline sign up – information meeting	Thursday January 9 th , 2025 23:59u CET
Information meeting	Friday January 10 th , 2025 (morning)
Deadline questions Q&A	Tuesday January 14 th , 2025 12:00u CET
Publish answers Q&A	Friday January 17 th , 2025
Closing date for Request to Participate	Tuesday January 28th, 2025 12:00u CET
Sending the selection letters	Friday January 31 st , 2025
Suspensive period (ten days)	Till Monday February 10 th , 2025 23:59u CET
Start Bidding Phase	Wednesday February 12th, 2025 23:59 CET

2.2.2 Information meeting

We will organize an online information meeting via MS Teams on January 10th 2025. During this meeting we will provide an explanation of the subject of the Assignment, the tender procedure and which documents and information you need to submit for your participation. We will answer any questions you may have as far as possible.

If you attend the information meeting, you can register in writing via the messaging module of the Tendering Platform (TenderNed) up to 24 hours before the meeting. We request that you include the names and contact details of the persons who will be attending the information meeting on your behalf in the registration.

We will not make a written report of the information meeting. No rights can be derived from the verbal answers to the questions. We therefore advise you to submit any questions you may have during the information meeting by means of Annex B. The answers we give in the Q&A Document are leading.

If it turns out that there is insufficient interest in the information meeting, it will be canceled.

2.2.3 Submitting questions and comments

You have the opportunity to ask questions or make comments about the Tender Documents. We expect a proactive attitude from you. If you have questions or comments, you should submit them as soon as possible. To do so, use **Annex B 'Submitting questions and comments'** and submit them via the message module of the Tendering Platform.

We conclude a round of questions by publishing a Q&A Document containing all questions asked by Interested Parties and our answers to them. We also report any changes to Tender Documents in a

Q&A Document. This may be accompanied by revised documentation of the relevant Tender Documents.

2.3 Communication during the Tender

Communication regarding the Tender will take place exclusively via the Tender Platform. During the Tender, it is not permitted to have contact with (other) employees of the Contracting Authority or organisations involved in the Tender in order to obtain information about the Tender. Acting in violation of this provision will generally lead to exclusion from further participation in the Tender.

2.4 Submitting the request for participation

You must submit the request for participation via the Tender Platform of TenderNed before the closing date as indicated in the schedule on the Tender Platform. After the closing date of the tender period, it is (technically) no longer possible to submit a Tender. We recommend submitting the request for participation well in advance.

For all necessary information of working with the Tender Platform of TenderNed see the following link: <https://www.tenderned.nl/cms/en/english/tenderned-dutch-governments-online-tendering-system>

2.5 Control, testing and assessment of the requests to participate

After opening, we check, test and assess the registrations.

Check completeness and formal requirements

We check whether your request to participate is complete and meets the formal requirements. A request to participate that is not complete or does not meet the formal requirements will generally be rejected as invalid and excluded from further participation in the Tender.

Assessment

We will assess whether Exclusion Grounds apply and whether your company meets the Grounds for exclusion (see Paragraph 3.1) and whether your Request to Participate meets Eligibility Requirements (see Chapter Paragraph 3.2). As a rule, we will set aside a request to participate that does not meet the aforementioned points as invalid and exclude it from further participation in the Tender.

Substantive assessment

If more than six (6) candidates pass the test of exclusion grounds and suitability criteria, we will evaluate your Request to Participate based on the selection criteria to establish a ranking of candidates. In the ranking, the six (6) parties with the highest scores will be selected.

2.6 Selection decision

After evaluating the Requests to Participate, we will simultaneously announce the selection decision to all candidates. No rights can be derived from the selection decision, nor does this decision imply the acceptance of an offer. After the communication of the selection decision, we will observe a standstill period of ten calendar days. During this period, any rejected parties have the right to appeal this decision.

After the standstill period, the contracting authority may send a written confirmation of the final selection decision. The selection decision will only be deemed final once the contracting authority has provided this written confirmation.

During the stand-still period, we may request evidence to verify the information you have provided in the context of this tender procedure.

2.7 Cost compensation

Tenders are not entitled to compensation for costs in the context of this Tender. The Contracting Authority has carefully considered this provision on the basis of provision 3.8A of the Proportionality Guide and the Tender Cost Reimbursement Guidelines of October 2018. In the event of (unexpected) withdrawal of the Tender due to causes not attributable to the Tenderers, the Contracting Authority will reconsider a tender cost reimbursement.

The possibility exists to halt the tender process at any stage, including the first phase and the BAFO phase. No cost compensation will be provided at any point during the tender process.

Additionally, the Contracting Authority reserves the right not to sign the contract.

2.8 Documents and evidence to be attached

In the table below we indicate which of the documents and evidence mentioned in this chapter you must enclose with the Tender. The evidence in the column 'On request' only needs to be provided by the selected parties, within five Working Days after a request to do so. The risk that evidence cannot be obtained in time lies with the parties.

Failure to provide the documents below will generally result in exclusion from participation in the Tender. We recommend that you collect and have the supporting documents ready in good time.

We may request additional evidence. We reserve the right to conduct further investigations into (the statements of) the parties.

	Description	Upon registration	Selected parties only, upon request
General Statements	European Single Procurement Document	X	
Evidence for Grounds for Exclusion	Registration in the national professional and trade register	X	
	Tendering Code of Conduct		X
Eligibility Requirements	Experience of the Party	X	

3 Requirements for the candidate

This chapter describes which (1) Exclusion Grounds and (2) Suitability Requirements we use and which information you must provide. With the ESPD you indicate whether or not the Exclusion Grounds apply to you and whether you meet the Eligibility Requirements. In this chapter we also describe which requirements apply if:

- you register with Subcontractor(s);
- you register as a Partnership;
- you rely on the financial and economic capacity of (a) Third Party(s);
- you rely on the technical and professional competence of (a) Third Party(s).

See Annex E for additional regulations for registering with Subcontractors or as a Partnership.

3.1 Grounds for exclusion

3.1.1 *Exclusion of Russian and Belarusian parties*

Based on the European sanctions against trade with Russia and Belarus, Russian and Belarusian parties or parties that use a Russian or Belarusian party as a subcontractor or supplier for more than 10% are excluded from participating in the Tender.

This concerns:

- persons with Russian or Belarusian nationality and persons or legal entities (companies, entities or bodies) established in Russia or Belarus;
- legal entities that are owned for more than 50% by a Russian or Belarusian party as mentioned under a; and
- persons or legal entities that act in the interest of or on the instructions of a party mentioned under a or b.
- The (legal) persons mentioned under b and c may also be (legal) persons established in a country other than Russia or Belarus.

3.1.2 *Mandatory and optional grounds for exclusion*

In part III of the European Single Procurement Document (ESPD), we declare mandatory and optional Exclusion Grounds applicable. The reasons for declaring the optional Exclusion Grounds in part III C of the ESPD applicable are as follows. We only wish to contract companies that are financially healthy, have good conduct, have no conflicts of interest and act with integrity and ethics.

The following optional exclusion grounds apply.

Optional grounds for exclusion	Declare applicable?
Breach of obligations based on environmental, social or labour law	Yes
Bankruptcy, insolvency or similar	Yes
Serious professional misconduct	No
Distortion of competition	Yes
Conflict of interest	Yes
Involved in the preparation	No
Past performance	No
False statement	Yes
Undue influence	Yes

In accordance with Article 2.86 paragraph 3 of the Public Procurement Act 2012, the applicability of a Ground for Exclusion to a company is equated with the situation in which a Ground for Exclusion applies to a person who is a member of the administrative, management or supervisory body or who has powers of representation, decision-making or control therein.

3.1.3 Completing the European Single Procurement Document

In the TenderNed application (or webpage), you must enter all the required information accurately and completely in the ESPD wizard (UEA wizard) via your own dashboard. After completing the ESPD, generate a PDF. Download the PDF, print it, and sign it. Attach the signed ESPD to your submission by uploading it.

If entrepreneurs decide to submit a joint tender for the Tender, the following applies:

- Subcontractor(s) – If you apply with Subcontractor(s), you must report this in Part II D of the ESPD. Each Subcontractor must also complete a ESPD (Part II A & B and Part III) and sign it legally.
- Partnership – If you apply as a Partnership, all members of the Partnership must complete the ESPD separately and sign it legally. You must state in Part II A with which entities you are entering into a Partnership.
- Reliance on Third Party(ies)– If you rely on (a) Third Party(ies) in order to meet the Suitability Requirements, you must report this in Part II C of the ESPD. In addition, each Third Party concerned must complete and validly sign its own ESPD (Part II A and B and Part III).

The ESPD must be legally signed by a natural person authorised to do so. The legally valid authority of the signatory is evident from the extract(s) from the Chamber of Commerce or the registration in the national professional or trade register in the country of establishment or, if this is not the case, another proof as referred to in Article 2.98 of the Public Procurement Act 2012.

3.1.4 Evidence for Grounds for Exclusion

The documents mentioned below serve as proof of your declaration by means of the ESPD that no Exclusion Grounds apply to you.

In accordance with Section 4 of Article 2.89 of the Public Procurement Act 2012, we also accept data and documents from a company established in another Member State of the European Union from the Member State concerned that serve an equivalent purpose as the evidence mentioned below or that demonstrate that the Grounds for Exclusion do not apply to the company concerned.

Registration in the national professional or trade register

A statement as referred to in section 1 of article 2.89 of the Public Procurement Act 2012, which is not older than six months at the time of submitting the Tender. The statement must show that you are registered in the national professional or trade register in accordance with the requirements applicable in the country in which you are established. If such a statement is not issued in the country of establishment, you must provide a statement or certificate under oath. Within the Netherlands, an extract of registration in the trade register of the Chamber of Commerce is sufficient for this purpose.

Tendering Code of Conduct

A copy of the declaration of conduct for tendering, as referred to in paragraph 2 of article 2.89 and chapter 4.1 of the Public Procurement Act 2012. The declaration of conduct for tendering may not be older than two years at the time of registration. If a Ground for Exclusion has occurred after the declaration of conduct for tendering has been issued, you are obliged to state this in the Tender, under penalty of exclusion.

You can request the tendering conduct statement via Justis. Due to the long processing time, we advise you to request the tendering conduct statement in advance of a possible request for it. If the decision on the application takes longer, this is at your risk. For more information, see: <https://www.justis.nl/producten/gva/>.

Foreign candidates must provide supporting documents in accordance with the national law of their country of establishment.

Declaration from the Tax Authorities

By submitting a tender and signing the ESPD, the candidate declares that the company has fulfilled its obligations to pay mandatory taxes and social security contributions, as referred to in paragraph 3 of Article 2.89 of the Public Procurement Act 2012.

In the event that companies decide to jointly register for the Tender, the following applies to the two above-mentioned documents (registration in the national professional or trade register and declaration of conduct for tendering):

- Subcontractor(s) – If you apply as a Subcontractor(s), only the main contractor needs to provide the two pieces of evidence listed above.
- Partnership – If you apply as a Partnership, each member of the Partnership must provide the two pieces of evidence listed above.
- Reliance on Third Party(ies) – If you rely on Third Party(ies) (only to meet the Eligibility Requirements, as outlined in the next paragraph), both you and the Third Party(ies) must provide the two pieces of evidence listed above.

3.2 Eligibility requirements

We will use the Suitability Requirements described below to help determine whether you are suitable to carry out the Assignment.

By ticking 'Yes' in section A of Part IV of the UEA you declare that your company meets all of the following Eligibility Requirements. The term 'selection criteria' in the UEA means: the Eligibility Requirements. If you do not meet the Eligibility Requirements stated, your Application will be invalid and we will set it aside.

3.2.1 Demonstration of financial and economic capacity – Coverage of liability risks

Your company is sufficiently insured against liability risks in connection with the execution of the Assignment. By signing the ESPD, you declare that the insurance will be maintained for at least the amounts mentioned in the draft agreement during the contract period.

If your company is currently not sufficiently insured to carry out the Assignment, you must provide a written statement from the insurance company in which the insurance company declares that it will take out the above-mentioned insurance with you prior to awarding the Assignment.

Only if you are selected candidate will you provide as proof a copy of the relevant insurance policy or a statement signed by the insurance company that you meet the insurance requirement requested above.

In the event that entrepreneurs decide to submit a joint tender for the Tender, the following applies:

- Subcontractor(s) – If you apply as a Subcontractor(s), only the main contractor needs to provide the pieces of evidence listed above.
- Partnership – If you apply as a Partnership, each member of the Partnership must provide the pieces of evidence listed above.
- Reliance on Third Party(ies) – If you are recourse to a Third Party(ies) (in order to meet the Eligibility Requirements), both you and the Third Party(ies) must provide the pieces of evidence listed above.

3.2.2 Demonstration of technical and professional competence – Experience of the Candidate

You demonstrate that you are sufficiently skilled and experienced to carry out the Assignment. To this end, we consider it necessary that you have certain core competencies. You demonstrate with reference assignments that you have those core competencies.

Everything we ask in this paragraph must be clear from the information you provide. We reserve the right to verify the accuracy of the reference by contacting the reference's contact person.

To carry out the Assignment you must have the following core competency:

#	Competence
A	Experience with a similar scope or relevance i.e. thermoplastic sheet consolidation manufacturing equipment (flat sheet). The reference project should emphasize: • The supplier's ability to adapt to challenges and provide innovative solutions. • How the suppliers work with the other parties. • The supplier and/or their partner Contributions to achieving the objectives of the reference project. • How long it took to deliver the project.

You demonstrate the requested competence with a maximum of one reference assignment per core competence. It is permitted to use the same reference assignment to demonstrate multiple core competences. **You use Appendix D for this.**

A reference assignment must meet the following criteria:

- In the case of an assignment that has already been completed, the completion date of the reference assignment is no older than three years from the publication date of this Tender.
- In the case of an assignment that is still ongoing, the start date of the reference assignment is older than one year from the publication date of this Tender.
- In the case of an assignment that is still ongoing, you only use the results that have already been achieved to demonstrate your competence. A forecast of the results is not sufficient.
- If you were/are part of a partnership when carrying out the reference assignment, you must describe what your share is (has been) in carrying out the reference assignment. Only your share in the reference assignment counts towards the assessment of whether this Suitability Requirement is met.
- The size of the reference assignment is at least € [360.000] excluding VAT per year.
- The reference assignment has been or is being carried out successfully and to the satisfaction of the relevant client. The reference assignment may have been or is being carried out at the Contracting Authority.

In the event that companies decide to apply jointly for the Tender, the following applies:

- Subcontractor(s) – If you apply as a Subcontractor(s), only the main contractor needs to provide the pieces of evidence listed above.
- Partnership – If you apply as a Partnership, each member of the Partnership must provide the three pieces of evidence listed above.
- Reliance on Third Part(y)(ies) – If you rely on a third part(y)(ies) to meet the required experience, you must provide evidence that you can actually rely on the required core competencies of the third part(y)(ies).

4 Selection Criteria for Cases With More Applicants Than Specified

4.1 The goal of selection criteria

Selection criteria are used to compare and evaluate the parties that meet the minimum suitability requirements and to determine which six (6) candidates we will invite to the bidding phase.

It is a relative evaluation process. The selection criteria have been established based on the nature (complexity) and scope of the contract. By applying the selection criteria, the parties are selected that are best positioned to submit a good bid and execute the contract most effectively.

This tender has only one selection criterion.

Selection criteria	Max. points
Relevant experience regarding the assignment	90 points
Qualitative assessment	1 points
<i>Total</i>	<i>91 points</i>

4.1.1 Selection criterion: relevant experience regarding the assignment

The Candidate possesses relevant knowledge and skills related to the assignment and have implemented that within the reference project as shown in Competence A. The more relevant the experience is the more points a Candidate can score. The contracting authority will use the reference project description you submitted from Annex D. The following aspects are considered more relevant and better suited to the assignment:

Relevant Aspects	Amount of Points	Does the reference project meets the requirement		Result
The project value was valued 400.000 euros or more and therefore considered to have a comparable complexity	10	☐ Yes	☐ No	
The project was delivered for a client, instead of an inhouse project.	5	☐ Yes	☐ No	
The project was completed within budget set before the start of the project.	5	☐ Yes	☐ No	
The whole project involved diverse machinery relevant and directly related to thermoplastic sheet consolidation:				
High temperature (450c)	20	☐ Yes	☐ No	
Fast heating and cooling cycle time (please specify the cycle time temperature and the time in Annex D of the reference project). We will be ranking the supplier with the fastest cycle times. The party with the fastest cycle times will receive 20 points, the next fastest party will receive 19 points, and so on until a party scores 0 points.	20	☐ Yes	☐ No	
Full automation (effects the cycle time)	20	☐ Yes	☐ No	
Dimension of the plates (1.1x1 m)	10	☐ Yes	☐ No	

4.1.2 Selection criterion: qualitative assessment

If the aforementioned scoring does not result in a distinctive ranking of six parties, the contracting authority will proceed with a qualitative assessment. The evaluation committee will assess the reference projects based on the following points.

- The extent to which the supplier demonstrates the ability to adapt to challenges and provide innovative solutions.
- The extent to which the supplier demonstrates to collaborate effectively with other parties.
- The degree to which the supplier and/or their partner contributed to achieving the objectives of the reference project.
- The timeliness with which the project was delivered, including the duration of the project delivery, and its comparability to the timelines of this assignment.

A single score will be assigned for the entire criterion, which applies to the criterion as a whole. In other words, the party that performs best across all of the above-mentioned points will receive the highest number of points. The scoring ranges from 1 to 0, where a 1 represents excellent eligibility and a 0 represents poor eligibility. Scores in between include an 0,8 for good eligibility, a 0,6 for sufficient eligibility, and a 0,4 for mediocre eligibility.

4.1.3 In the event of tied scores

In the event that some Candidates have the same total score, the above mentioned criterium for which the most points could be awarded will be applied as the decisive criterium. The subscription with the highest score for this criterion will thus move up in the ranking. If the Candidate obtained the same score for this criterion, the criterion with the next highest score will prevail, et cetera.

5 Preview of the bidding phase

5.1 Procedure

With the expiration of the standstill period, the selection phase ends and the bidding phase begins. In the bidding phase, we will proceed with the tender by sending an Invitation to Bid and the Award Guideline to the selected candidates.

The Contracting Authority aims to have two or three submission rounds during this bidding phase. After Bidders have submitted their initial Bid, all Bidders will receive individual feedback on their initial Bid in a meeting. During this meeting, both the Bidder and the Contracting Authority will have the opportunity to ask questions to improve the Bid and ensure it aligns as closely as possible with the assignment.

Once the final version of the Invitation to Tender has been published, Bidders can submit a final Bid, referred to as a Best-And-Final-Offer ("BAFO"). The final Bids will then be evaluated.

The bidding phase is outlined below in bullet points, in order of sequence.

- Q&A round 1: Written round of questions
- Request from suppliers to send them the materials regarding the prototype
- Receiving the first bid, which is a written offer and the result of the prototype
- Evaluation of the first bid by the project team. Feedback is sent to the individual suppliers
- Dialogue with the project team for each supplier regarding their feedback and first bid
- Optional: Publication of general findings relevant to all parties
- Q&A round 2: Written round of questions
- Receiving the BAFO (Best and Final Offer)
- Evaluation of the BAFO by the project team. Final decision for the best bid (best value for money)
- Sending the awarding decision and award and rejection letters, including feedback and scores
- Suspensive period (twenty days) during which rejected suppliers can appeal the awarding decision
- Final award and contract signing

The contracting authority has the option to deviate from the above during the procedure, for example by adding an additional information round or an extra feedback round, as long as it benefits the quality of the bids.

It is important to note that all parties are required to create a prototype based on the materials provided by the contracting authority and submit it back to the contracting authority. The prototype will be evaluated based on objective criteria as part of the awarding criteria.

5.2 Award criteria

During the bidding phase, you have the opportunity to submit an offer. This offer will be evaluated based on pre-determined awarding criteria. The awarding criteria will be further detailed in the next phase, upon publication of the bidding guide. Below is a high-level overview of the aspects on which the selection of the best supplier will be based.

In the bidding phase, the overall cost evaluation will play a significant role in the assessment. Manufacturing costs per SRPP and PPS sheet will be calculated based on the production process used for the prototype submitted, using key performance indicators. The total cost of ownership will also be taken into account, considering investment costs, cycle times, energy costs, and the

necessary labor costs for operation. A fully automated solution, which may have higher initial costs, can compete with a solution that requires manual labor but is cheaper in investment.

Another key evaluation criterion is the quality of the submitted prototype, for example, whether it is fully consolidated. This will be assessed alongside the overall quality of the proposed solution, focusing on whether the technology is proven or, if not, how convincingly the supplier can demonstrate that their technology is mature and reliable. The supplier must provide evidence as to why their choice of technology is the best fit for Cato Composites and how it aligns with the project's objectives.

Furthermore, a detailed plan of action from contract signing to the delivery of the final product is a crucial element. This plan should clearly outline the steps to be taken and must adhere to strict timelines due to the granted subsidy and the associated deadlines.

If one of the selected parties declines to submit a tender, no other parties will be invited for the bidding phase and the bidding phase will continue with the selected amount of suppliers that are left.

Prototype

Cato Composites would like to include prototyping into the award criteria. In other words, Cato Composites will send some raw material over to the suppliers of the different proposals, who will then send over the product that they made with it. This product will then be judged on objective criteria i.e. The process description, consolidated sheets quality, and recorded cycle times (heating/cooling and handling time) will be evaluated.

5.3 Global planning Bidding phase

A competitive procedure with negotiation is not easy to plan, because it is difficult to predict how many rounds of negotiation we deem necessary. The planning below for the bidding phase is therefore a global planning. We make the assumption that there will be a maximum of two rounds of negotiations.

All dates are subject to change by the Contracting Authority.

Start Bidding Phase	
Publication of tender documents	Wednesday February 12th, 2025
Ask information about prototype	Thursday February 20 th , 2025
Deadline questions Q&A	Thursday February 26 th , 2025 12:00 CET
Publish answers Q&A	Thursday March 13 th , 2025
First bid	Wednesday March 26th, 2025 12:00u CET
Written feedback	Friday March 28 th , 2025
Dialogue	Tuesday April 1 st , 2025
Deadline questions Q&A round 2	Monday April 7 th , 2025 12:00u CEST
Publish answers Q&A round 2	Monday April 14 th , 2025
Best and Final Offer	Friday April 25th, 2025 12:00u CEST
Consensus meeting project team	Monday May 5 th , 2025
Sending the decision letters	Friday May 9 th , 2025
Suspensive period (twenty days)	Till May 29 th , 2025 23:59u CEST
Signing of agreement	June 1st, 2025

6 Attachments

Annex A: General Purchasing Terms and Conditions

Annex B: Submission of Questions and Comments

Annex C: European Single Procurement Document (ESPD)

Annex D: Bidder's Experience

Annex E: Further information on tender procedure