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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Term	Description
AF	Application Framework
BPR	Business Process Re-engineering
CA	Contracting Authority
CPV	Common Procurement Vocabulary
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
DoW	Description of Work
DPS	Dynamic Purchasing Systems
EC	European Commission
EO	Economic Operator
ePP	electronic Public Procurement
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
EU	European Union
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDA	Interchange of Data between Administrations
IDABC	Interoperable Delivery of European eGovernment Services to Public Administrations, Business and Citizens
ISM	Information Security Management
ISP	Internet Service Provider
IT	Information Technology
PC	Personal Computer
RA	Risk Analysis
ROI	Return on Investment
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SME	Small Medium Enterprise
UPS	Uninterruptible Power Supply
WP	WorkPackage

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PART II – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The present document is the result of the work performed in Task 1.3 ”Development of guidelines for Public Administrations and Suppliers” of WorkPackage 1 (“Analysis of the Western Balkan Public Procurement Environment”) of the project and includes the guidelines that were developed for Western Balkan Suppliers, regarding the adoption of electronic Public Procurement solutions.

Following the analysis of the procurement environment in the Western Balkan region [1], Task 1.3 of WP1 focuses on the development of specific guidelines on the adoption and usage of an electronic procurement system. These guidelines include guidance on harmonisation requirements of the internal processes of suppliers in line with EU legal framework. The target audience of these guidelines are the Western Balkan Suppliers involved in public procurement procedures.

For optimum implementation and effectiveness, the guidelines are categorised under the following axes[1], according to their characteristics and the target area(s) they affect:

- Strategic & Organisational level
- Procedural level
- Technical level
- Legal level
- Human resources level

It should be noted that the guidelines do not cover the design and implementation of an ePP system using the ePP Application Framework, as this is the objective of Deliverable D11: “Practice Guide for electronic Public Procurement Solutions” [2] of the project.

[1] It is possible that an action may be put under more than one category, however it is presented under the category deemed as the most representative/suitable one.

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PART III – FULL DESCRIPTION

This part includes Chapters 1-7.

- Chapter 1. Introduction
- Chapter 2. Strategic & Organisational Guidelines
- Chapter 3. Procedural Guidelines
- Chapter 4. Technical Guidelines
- Chapter 5. Legal Guidelines
- Chapter 6. Human Resources Guidelines
- Chapter 7. Conclusion

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1. INTRODUCTION

The overall aim of the ELLECTRA-WeB project is to specify, develop and test an Open-source electronic Public Procurement (ePP) Application Framework and a set of Supporting Guidelines that will enable, on the one hand, Western Balkan ICT solution developers to cost-effectively develop, and, on the other hand, Western Balkan Public Organisations and Suppliers to easily deploy and use trusted, interoperable, user-friendly, secure and EC compliant electronic Public Procurement solutions.

The work that will be presented in this deliverable is part of the "Analysis of the Western Balkan Public Procurement Environment" WorkPackage (WP1), covers Task 1.3: "Development of guidelines for Public Administrations and Suppliers", and focuses on the development of practical guidelines that should be followed by Western Balkan Suppliers in order for them to be able to participate in electronic public procurement tenders conducted by the use of electronic public procurement solutions developed on the ePP Application Framework. To this end, this work has taken into account the relevant legislative proposals for eProcurement as well as the most recent EU policy documents and reports related to the subject, as can be seen in the References chapter.

The present document consists of five sections as described below:

- **Strategic and organisational guidelines** – Presents recommendations and a roadmap for the adoption, from a strategic and organisational point of view, of electronic procurement within the enterprise.
- **Procedural guidelines** – Identifies and analyses issues and opportunities for establishing and re-organising business processes and setting up new roles for electronic procurement.
- **Technical guidelines** – Examines the (minimal) generic requirements in terms of technical and infrastructural preparation.
- **Legal guidelines –** Analyses issues concerning harmonisation and adherence to legal and regulatory requirements.
- **Human Resources guidelines** – Presents recommendations for improving the skills of company employees, and setting up a (basic) human resource strategy for electronic procurement.

It is not mandatory for a supplier to follow the entire set of guidelines presented in this report. The intent of this report is to present guidelines and 'best practices' that could be of use for a supplier considering its participation in electronic public procurement competitions. It is at the supplier's discretion to examine, evaluate and decide which guidelines are most suitable for his company.

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2. STRATEGIC & ORGANISATIONAL GUIDELINES

The development and implementation of a successful electronic procurement business model is a challenge that goes beyond mere technological preparation and involves management support and organisational adaptation. Therefore significant actions should be taken at the strategic and organisational levels of a supplier's company that will enable them to adopt/ join an ePP solution and participate in electronic public procurement competitions.

2.1 Determine Cost Effectiveness

A Return on Investment (ROI) study may need to be performed in order to help a Supplier that is sceptical about participating in electronic public procurement competitions understand the benefits of adopting an ePP solution. The decision should be based on the results of a ROI analysis and of a Risk Analysis (RA) study, which could be either performed by properly qualified supplier employees or outsourced and performed by external experts/consultants. The benefits of the transition (e.g. easier access to public sector markets within and beyond national borders; reduction of market surveillance costs; time savings; lower tendering costs due to the reuse of electronically supplied information; elimination of costs related to printing and shipment of tenders; reduced market entry costs etc.) should be properly balanced against other costs (at the micro, tactical, or strategic level). A ROI analysis should at least:

- Establish an "eProcurement adoption programme", which sets tangible goals for measuring the success of the Supplier's decision to participate in electronic public procurement competitions.
- Consider the exact costs involved in rolling out the ePP system as the primary procurement mechanism for the organisation. Estimate necessary fees, IT investment, personnel training investment and any other set-up related costs.
- In large private sectors, be applied at both the micro-level (i.e. considering procurement processes in the different offices and/or departments of a business) and the strategic level.
- Assess the level of investment that is requested from the Supplier to obtain the required level of interoperability with eProcurement, cost and effort for integration with back-office systems, as well as to ensure legal and practical compliance with e-procurement rules and principles.
- Assess the cost and effort for Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) and training of employees.

2.2 Developing a Change Control strategy

At a minimum, computerisation (i.e. systems and tools) and automation of relevant business procedures, should be carefully designed for SMEs. For medium to large suppliers, a key element of the transformation program should be the delivery of an effective Change Management strategy. The scope will be to manage and support significant changes in the technology, workforce, procurement processes. For each significant change (e.g. procurement or upgrading of the ICT infrastructure in terms of hardware, software or network equipment), a set of goals and an unambiguous reasoning should be established. The strategy should be in strict accordance with a Human Resources Strategy, and feedback from involved parties and personnel should be taken into account. For every change in the business process of the Supplier, a question of organisational change readiness (i.e. the readiness of employees to employ new working processes, level of experience and trust in using electronic tools) should be answered.

The involvement of users at the beginning of the change management project is highly recommended, and helps to reduce problems with usability and accessibility that may negatively affect the use of the system.

At a generic level, the change management principles and actions that may be adopted are:

- Establish Purpose and Initiative, i.e. develop a set of goals and unambiguous reasoning for change. For example, perform an analysis on the procurement procedures for each department in order to ascertain the areas that can generate the most benefits.
- Identify internal operations that can be modified in order to achieve the expected benefits. For a medium to large business, establish 'change partners' within each department to manage the

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process changes relevant to their department, and to improve the feedback mechanisms at the department-level.

- Educate staff on the new EU legislation and the respective national legislative framework on electronic procurement. Develop an in-house business process change course for senior managers and ensure process changes are included in end user training.
- Document the (new) business processes that are supported by electronic means.
- Perform face-to-face visits and discuss with managers and staff, prior to rollout, to explain the procurement strategy and the process changes.

2.3 Participate in public Procurement adoption Programs and Events

Supplier organizations should seek for and consider participating in any “supplier adoption” programs, seminars, awareness campaigns or other rollout events that may be organised by the state, service providers, or public authorities and institutions, which operate an e-procurement system and host electronic public procurement competitions, concerning the transition of the traditional procurement procedures to e-Procurement. Such events may educate suppliers (and in particular SMEs) on the benefits of e-Procurement, assist them to define a strategy for participating in electronic public procurement competitions, and help them understand how they can optimise their internal procedures for benefiting the most from the participation in electronic procurement.

2.4 Look for Guidance

For any issue concerning the participation in or use of electronic public procurement procedures or ePP systems, the suppliers should seek appropriate guidance by either a central government agency responsible for public procurement, such as a Public Procurement Agency, Office or Board, or the Contracting Authority that operates the ePP system and conducts electronic competitions. These organisations should be the primary contact points for all ePP-related issues, and they would most probably operate some kind of help desk, providing at least telephone support to suppliers.

2.5 Managing Decisions on Outsourcing and Integration

The Supplier (or a Consultant on its behalf) should perform a study and propose:

a) whether the Supplier will manage and coordinate the participation to the e-procurement system by itself or outsource the procuring functions to a third party (e.g. SMEs may lack the IT expertise and/or infrastructure to implement the e-procurement processes adequately and correctly),

b) on a per-case basis, and only if the ePP solution supports this functionality, whether e-procurement will be aligned and integrated with the already established IT infrastructure (e.g. ERP systems, Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Data mining, and accounting systems).

2.6 Hiring a Consultant for Procurement Governance

Transferring some or all of the procurement procedures in an electronic environment demands an optimisation of the supplier’s business processes and, probably, its organisational structure. If the supplier does not possess the required know-how or does not feel confident about managing this change, it is recommended that he hires a Consultant to assist him to all issues concerning the preparation of the framework for the leadership, organisational structures, technical preparation, investment in personnel, equipment and new processes (e.g. training), adherence to procurement standards, compliance verification, verifying integration with back-end systems, and ensuring that the Supplier’s information systems support and enable the effective participation to e-procurement, among others. After a reasonable period of 1-2 years, according to the level of readiness that the supplier has reached at that time, the Supplier should try to takeover all of the Consultant’s activities and manage the electronic procurement procedures by itself.

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3. PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

This section provides a basic set of guidelines, concerning procedural issues, which should be followed in order to enable the effective use of an ePP solution by a supplier. The guidelines include the development of a business process reengineering plan that describes the changes to the 'traditional' procurement procedures, the establishment of new roles suitable for participating in electronic public procurement competitions, and also address conformance with best practices as well as security issues.

3.1 Development of a Business Process Re-engineering Plan

For large businesses, Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) practices may be necessary as the design of new administrative or business processes may be inevitable. This phase aims at identifying a set of possible scenarios taking into account the current best practices in the automation of supplier activities with respect to the procurement domain and the organisational framework.

Since the mere solution of just putting ICT besides traditional processes may admittedly fail and even backfire (if performed in an ad-hoc manner), migration to eProcurement (as any migration from traditional ways to accomplish tasks to computer-supported modalities) require a deeper reflection on how processes are accomplished within or across different sectors of the business.

BPR for e-procurement can be seen as a radical analysis and redesign of workflows and processes towards the achievement of new quality and performance standards according to the e-procurement context. If necessary, a Consultant may be hired for performing BPR of the procurement process in all departments of the Supplier, facilitating and coaching top management staff to progressively undertake the work themselves. More specifically, the BPR plan should address the following:

- To further assist in the improvement of the e-procurement process, suppliers may perform an internal re-organisation of their existing financial/procurement resources and personnel.
- The establishment of user roles with specific responsibilities (accountability) and control mechanisms defining the exact steps required for participation to e-procurement will increase the co-ordination, supervision and transparency within the Supplier organisation.
- Internal procedures should be also re-organised, in order to cut red tape, and render the company more flexible and improve efficiency.
- The re-engineering of the business processes should be completed prior to joining an e-procurement environment.

3.2 Establishing e-Procurement Roles

As roles and responsibilities will change when implementing eProcurement, the organisational scheme within each supplier organisation should assign responsibilities to procurement officers according to a predefined set of required skills:

- A new enhanced organisational structure should ensure the effective and efficient execution of procurement processes and activities through the use of electronic means.
- All procurement personnel should be allocated specific duties in the information exchange and knowledge creation process for enhancing overall efficiency (creation, verification, approval).
- A technical support team should assist procurement officers to use ICT tools and to adjust their new assignments and working procedures.

The basic role that a supplier should at least establish within its company is the role of the "Procurement Officer". The procurement officer (or officers in case of large supplier companies) is responsible for:

- browsing for new business opportunities on the ePP portal
- creating and submitting tenders (or applications to participate in restricted procedures)
- posting questions on the ePP system for clarifications regarding specific competitions, and receiving answers

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- receiving notifications from the ePP system regarding the evaluation of the tenders in public procurement competitions, where the supplier has participated.

The procurement officer of a supplier company should register to the ePP system, following the appropriate procedure, and receive the credentials (username/password and/or digital certificate) for logging into the system. These credentials are needed every time a supplier's procurement officer tries to access privileged (i.e. not available to the general public) information and functions of the ePP system (e.g. submission of tenders).

3.3 Using paperless procedures

When the traditional public procurement procedures are used, the suppliers are obliged to collect and submit to the Contracting Authority a large amount of paper documents; justification documents and certificates, several paper copies of technical and financial tenders, products' prospectuses, etc. They are also obliged –in most of the cases- to present themselves in person to the Contracting Authority in order to prove their eligibility to submit a tender, i.e. whether they are authorised by their companies to represent the company and submit the tender. The use of an ePP system removes several of the above barriers and improves the entire procurement procedures. More specifically, according to the requirements set by the Contracting Authority that runs an electronic procurement competition, the following main changes are made to the procurement procedures:

- No paper documents are collected and submitted to the system. Electronic files are drafted and uploaded to the system instead. These files include the technical and financial tenders of the supplier, products' prospectuses and probably justification documents and certificates. These files may be encrypted according to the requirements and guidelines set by the CA.
- No physical presence of the supplier's representatives to the CA's premises is needed. The supplier proves his identity to the CA during the registration procedure, and every time he logs into the ePP system, using the credentials that the CA has provided.

The communication between the CA and the supplier regarding a procurement competition is also supported by the ePP system, e.g. for issuing requests for explanations for a specific Request for Proposals, receiving explanations and clarifications, being notified for the progress of the competition and the evaluation results, etc.

The above differences between the 'traditional' and the electronic procurement procedures must be taken seriously into consideration by a supplier, when he reviews his internal procurement procedures and decides on the changes to be made to them. These changes should be ideally documented in the BPR plan of the supplier.

3.4 Monitoring TED

TED, the online database of public procurement contracts in the European Union and Member States, has to be continuously monitored in case a supplier wants to participate in international procurement competitions so that he timely identifies international business opportunities. This responsibility should also be assigned to the procurement officer(s) of the supplier.

3.5 Workflow Management for establishing approval paths

In case the ePP solution allows the integration with the back-office information systems of a supplier (e.g. financial, accounting, ERP systems), the internal procedures of the supplier should be modelled into flexible system workflows that optimise the approval paths followed (e.g. from drafting a tender to its final approval, before it is uploaded and submitted to the ePP system).

3.6 Design of a Security Program

Doing business online generates some potential information security risks that do not exist in traditional procurement procedures. These risks should be properly identified and addressed so that they are prevented from appearing or their consequences are minimal and insignificant. To this direction, a basic Information Security Management (ISM) program should exist or be developed for suppliers participating to eProcurement, which covers at least the following issues:

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- Defining Subject Roles: Roles and security responsibilities for all members of the personnel, involved in the procurement process should be strictly defined (following the 'Need-to-Know' and 'Least-Privilege' principles).
- Authentication & Identification: A robust access control and authorisation policy: All entities and roles that are involved in the (critical events of the) e-procurement process should be properly identified and be given proper authorisation to use the internal systems.
- Authorisation: Providing access control for enforcing permissions to the resource and information available to users. For authorisation purposes, unique user roles and access rights should be used.
- Confidentiality and Integrity: Assuring the safe storage of the electronic data and specifically the confidentiality and integrity of the procurement electronic documents, when they are locally archived for future reference. For integrity, verifying that the content of the internal electronic data has not accidentally or intentionally been altered or destroyed.
- Anti-malware protection: As suppliers who submit electronic tender documents to a generalised system may introduce viruses through their electronic documentation files, suppliers should be responsible for cleaning their documents before submission.

The ISM program should also describe the mechanisms the supplier uses for recovering by unexpected system disruptions. Since the access to an ePP system requires practically only a connection to the Internet, the supplier should assure that its ISP provider is reliable. If this is not the case, the supplier should examine the possibility of using two different providers for accessing the Internet and, consequently, the ePP system.

For an holistic approach to information security, the ISM program should be designed according to security standards (e.g., ISO 17799, ISO 27003) and embrace a pragmatic view on security and authentication based on technology generally available and industry-wide practices. On the other hand, it should also take into account the fact that too high security standards can generate barriers to electronic transactions if the solutions applied are not generally available.

3.7 Adhere to European Standards and well-known Practices

In order for a supplier to become familiar with electronic public procurement as it is defined under the EU framework, it is highly recommended to closely monitor the progress on the issue at European level, and get informed on the EU policies that regulate the specific domain. More specifically:

- To study the EU directives, regulations, decisions and notices concerning public procurement [10].
- To study the new CPV classification system for public procurement (mandatory in the European Union as from February 2006), as amended by the Commission Regulation (EC) No 213/2008, as well as to other relative standards (e.g., NUTS, CPC etc).
- To study the IDABC (Interoperable Delivery of European eGovernment Services to public Administrations, Businesses and Citizens) reports and guidelines on eProcurement [11].
- To continuously monitor supplier-specific European portals for e-procurement (e.g. the SIMAP portal for suppliers [12], the European Commission portal [13]) as well as European portals describing best-practices for e-procurement (e.g. the e-procurement forum portal [22], the ePractice.eu portal [23], etc).
- To study the EU guidelines for Suppliers concerning public procurement [10].

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4. TECHNICAL GUIDELINES

In this section a set of guidelines and suggestions are provided concerning the process of adjusting the technical infrastructure within the Supplier's organisation. As a matter of fact, assuming that the Supplier already disposes a minimal IT and networking infrastructure, and that the ePP platform will function on top of web technologies, there are not any significant requirements for the Supplier's investing on extra software and/or hardware platforms.

4.1 Adjustment of internal IT systems

Basically, no software other than an Internet browser, e-mail and office automation software (word processing and spread sheet) are required at the Supplier side for participation in electronic procurement procedures. More specifically, software-related requirements associated to the majority of e-procurement transactions are primarily:

- A word processor / spread sheet and other standard PC software (e.g. pdf reader/writer, compression software, etc.),
- Internet browser software and
- An e-mail communication system.

The only other prerequisite that may exist for being able to use the ePP system refers to the encryption software, which may be used for encrypting the tender documents, as described in section **Error! Reference source not found.**.

In the hardware layer, a basic networking infrastructure is required and involves at a minimum a single Personal Computer with adequate processing and storage capabilities and a connection to the Internet. No other hardware and communication prerequisites exist for using the ePP system.

The suppliers should take the above requirements into consideration and make the necessary adjustments to their ICT infrastructure. These requirements refer at least to the infrastructure used by the procurement officer(s) of the suppliers.

4.2 Redundant and reliable Infrastructure

As the transition to e-procurement may turn one or several internal e-procurement systems to points of failures (from a security point of view), it is suggested that some basic reliability and redundancy requirements be expressed at the component/unit/system level, in terms of hardware, software and communication equipment, within the internal network as well as in the interface with the external network. Some points that may be of use for a supplier in order to increase the reliability of his ePP-related ICT infrastructure include the following:

- Even if the ePP system does not impose specific requirements, it is recommended that the PCs used for procurement purposes be medium to high-end computers, equipped with adequate processing power, memory and storage space.
- The use of a UPS (Uninterruptible Power Supply) device is also highly recommendable in order to avoid disruptions caused by power supply failures.
- For the telecommunication equipment used to access the Internet, the supplier may want to examine the possibility of using redundant pieces of equipment (routers, switches) to minimise hardware failures.
- The use of two different ISP providers for accessing the Internet is proposed in order to assure that no disruptions to accessing the ePP system exist due to ISP's services failures. Appropriate Service Level Agreements (SLA) should be signed between the supplier and the ISP provider(s) describing –among other things- the connection bandwidth, availability and downtime, etc.

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5. LEGAL GUIDELINES

While there are not any hard prerequisites for Economic Operators concerning harmonisation with the EU legal framework in order to participate to the electronic procurement competitions, suppliers will benefit from studying the relative legal documents at European and national levels. In any case, the compliance of the electronic public procurement procedures with the EU legislation is assured by the CAs, during the design and implementation of the ePP system.

5.1 Harmonisation with EU legislation

Suppliers should be up-to-date with documents regarding full harmonisation with EU legislation. More specifically:

- Commission Directive 2004/18/EC on the coordination of procedures for the award of public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts [15].
- Commission Directive 2004/17/EC coordinating the procurement procedures of entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors [14].
- Commission Regulation (EC) No 1564/2005 [16] establishing standard forms for the publication of notices in the framework of public procurement procedures pursuant to Directives 2004/17/EC and 2004/18/EC.
- Commission Directive 2005/51/EC [17] amending Directive 2004/17/EC and Directive 2004/18/EC.
- EC Decisions and Notices [10].
- Commission Directive 2001/78/EC on the use of standard forms in the publication of public contract notices [18].
- Commission Regulation (EC) No 2151/2003 [19] amending Regulation (EC) No 2195/2002 on the Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV).
- Commission Regulation (EC) No 213/2008 [20] of 28 November 2007 amending Regulation (EC) No 2195/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV) and Directives 2004/17/EC and 2004/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on public procurement procedures, as regards the revision of the CPV.

Additionally, an Economic Operator may study (any other) supplier-specific EU legislation, e.g. the Commission document on how rejected bidders can challenge decisions (Directive 2007/66/EC [21] amending Council Directives 89/665/EEC and 92/13/EEC with regard to improving the effectiveness of review procedures concerning the award of public contracts).

5.2 Adhere to national legislation for e-procurement

Suppliers should adhere to the national requirements for eligibility in public procurement procedures:

- The suppliers should study the national legislation of the country that describes the certificates required for the eligibility of tenderers in public procurement procedures.
- In addition, the official lists with the relative certification bodies, as published by member states [15], need to be studied.

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6. HUMAN RESOURCES GUIDELINES

The use of electronic means in public procurement procedures requires different skills from the suppliers' employees, and especially the procurement officers, than the traditional procedures. This section presents recommendations for improving the skills of procurement staff, and setting up a human resource strategy suitable for electronic procurement.

6.1 Setting up a Human Resource strategy for e-procurement

The scope of this strategy should be to manage and support significant changes in the composition and nature of the Supplier's workforce, and related issues of staff development, recruitment, retention and acceptable use policies. In large organisations, the strategy should take into account the rich patchwork of sub-cultures with employees adopting a range of values, beliefs and behaviours suited to their particular working environment.

For example, the skills needed to operate simple e-tendering procedures are limited assuming that the user is fairly familiar with IT. However, for more advanced systems, such as Dynamic Purchasing Systems (using e-Catalogues), e-Purchasing and e-Invoicing, if such functionality is supported by the ePP system, the requirements are higher. Admittedly the most critical factors of using the ePP system are related to the recruitment of skilled staff and to the development of training programmes for the employees. To be effective such training programmes need to provide awareness raising among the suppliers' employees as well as equip them with the IT skills required to use the ePP systems. In this regard they need to address the implications of the new legal framework regulating the e-procurement domain and disseminate experience and knowledge on good procurement practices. As regards skills and knowledge, this includes knowledge and competences in relation to the use of general ICT equipment (PCs and office automation software, Internet browser) and the use of the ePP system.

6.2 Organise training events

The organisation of training events within the enterprise will assist users to become familiar with the e-procurement process. Furthermore, the establishment of specific training policies for the development of the appropriate ICT skills for using, supporting and maintaining the internal systems involved in the e-procurement process are also recommended. In addition, the update of user guides and of policy documents for "Acceptable Use" may be also considered. This way, all users (or at least users responsible for procurement procedures, such as procurement officers) are given the opportunity to understand how e-procurement works, adhere to their responsibilities, experiment with the system and comprehend its functionalities, and, finally, appreciate the advantages it introduces in public procurement competitions.

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7. CONCLUSION

This Deliverable, “eProcurement Guidelines for Suppliers”, aimed at identifying and analysing a set of guidelines that should be followed by the Western Balkan Suppliers in order to be able to participate in electronic public procurement competitions under the EU framework. The aim was to generate a set of (general enough, to be non-discriminatory) recommendations that address all issues of EU-compliant electronic public procurement adoption by the Western Balkan Suppliers. The report was structured in five axes (strategic and organisational, procedural, technical, legal and human resources) as this better depicts the different views that an Economic Operator should examine during the eProcurement transformation.

Some of the most important guidelines include:

- At the strategic and organisational levels: examine the cost effectiveness of participating in electronic procurement competitions, develop a change control strategy, participate in public procurement (adoption) programs and events.
- At the procedural level: develop a business process re-engineering plan, establish e-procurement roles, register to the ePP system, familiarise with the use of the electronic procedures, take into account security issues.
- At the technical level: assure that the ICT infrastructure is adequate for using the ePP system and reliability issues are well addressed.
- At the legal level: get familiar with EU and national legislation on public procurement.
- At the human resources level: acquire or develop the necessary IT skills for employees involved in public procurement procedures, and organise internal training events.

The adoption of the proposed guidelines does not guarantee that suppliers will join electronic public procurement procedures in the most effective way, but will definitely help them set the ground for a smooth transition of the traditional procurement procedures to an electronic environment, following a specific strategy and plan.

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PART IV – REFERENCES

This part provides references for the report. It contains a bibliography.

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