

1. Introduction

This Procurement Policy ("Policy") regulates the acquisition of goods and services for the Paréa Lesvos community center and aims to ensure that all procurement activities are conducted in a fair, transparent, and cost-effective manner.

Purpose

- Ensure a **transparent and accountable** procurement process.
- Achieve the **best value** and **optimal quality** in the procurement of goods and services.
- Promote **fair and equitable treatment** of all potential suppliers.
- Ensure **compliance** with all legal and regulatory requirements.

This Policy applies to all **staff, volunteers, and representatives of Europe Cares** involved in the procurement of goods and services.

Principles

Procurement activities at Europe Cares will be guided by the following principles:

- **Integrity:** All activities shall be conducted with integrity and in an ethical manner.
- **Transparency:** Decisions and processes will be transparent to ensure stakeholder confidence.
- **Accountability:** Individuals involved in procurement are accountable for the decisions they make.
- **Efficiency:** Procurement processes will be efficient and timely to meet the needs of Europe Cares.

2. Authority and Responsibility

The Board of Directors of Europe Cares has ultimate accountability for compliance with the procurement policy. Day-to-day responsibility is delegated to the Field Coordinator, which is tasked with overseeing procurement activities. The Project Coordinator is directly responsible for procurement in the operations of Europe Cares, supported by other representatives of Europe Cares, such as staff or volunteers.

Procurement Planning

Proper planning, including the assessment of needs, market research, and budgeting, is essential for effective procurement. The Field Coordinator is accountable for proper procurement planning, the Project Coordinator is directly responsible.

Approval

- The procurement of goods and services within the scope of the existing inventory that are planned within the current budget of operations and are required for the daily operation of the project do not require additional approval.
- The procurement of new goods and services under 500€ outside of the existing inventory or that expand the scope of operations but that are within the current operating budget require the approval of the Field Coordinator. If these expenses fall outside of the operating budget, the procurement requires the approval of the Head of Mission.
- The procurement of new goods and services over 500€ but below 2.000€ outside the existing inventory or that expand the scope of operations but that fall within the existing operating budget require the approval of the Head of Mission.
- The procurement of new goods and services above 2.000€ and below 4.000€ outside the existing budget requires the approval of the Head of Mission and a notification to the Board of Directors, explaining the necessity of procuring the goods or services.

3. Supplier Selection and Management

Supplier Selection

Suppliers will be selected on a competitive basis where possible. Criteria for selection include:

- Price,
- Quality,
- Reliability,
- Service

Supplier Management

Relations with suppliers will be managed professionally and with mutual respect. In case of incidents of violations of this principle by either party, the Head of Mission must be informed via an Incidence Report.

4. Methods of Procurement

The following methods will be utilized:

- Request for Quotation (RFQ): For purchases above 300€, the offers of at least two suppliers must be compared.
- Direct Purchasing : In cases where competitive methods are not practical or in the best interest of Europe Cares, goods and services can be procured directly. For purchases above 300€, the Head of Mission must be informed in such cases.

5. Contract Management

Ongoing contracts are to be managed to ensure suppliers adhere to agreed terms, conditions, and standards.

6. Ethics and Conflict of Interest

Europe Cares upholds the highest standards of ethical conduct in all procurement activities and is committed to preventing conflicts of interest.

Ethical Standards

All individuals involved in procurement must conduct themselves with integrity, avoiding any actions that could discredit Europe Cares or jeopardize trust in its procurement processes.

Conflict of Interest Avoidance

Conflicts of interest, whether actual, potential, or perceived, must be avoided. This includes situations where a staff member's personal interests may conflict with their duty to Europe Cares or where a staff member may receive personal gain from a procurement decision.

Disclosure of Interests

Staff must disclose any relationships or interests that could influence, or appear to influence, their impartiality in procurement decisions.

Fairness and Impartiality

Procurement decisions will be made solely based on merit and in the best interest of Europe Cares, ensuring fairness to all suppliers and stakeholders.

Sanctions for Violations

Violations of ethical standards or failure to disclose conflicts of interest will result in disciplinary action, which may include termination of employment and legal action, if applicable.

7. Environmental and Social Considerations

Europe Cares is dedicated to responsible procurement that respects environmental sustainability and positive social impact.

Sustainable Procurement

Procurement decisions will prioritize products and services that demonstrate environmental benefits, such as reduced energy consumption, minimal waste, and lower carbon footprints.

Socially Responsible Sourcing

Suppliers will be evaluated on their social responsibility performance, including labor practices, community engagement, and ethical business conduct.

Ecologically-friendly Products and Services

Preference will be given to eco-friendly products and services that are recyclable, biodegradable, or made from renewable resources.

Supplier Diversity

Europe Cares will seek to diversify its supplier base by engaging with businesses that are minority-owned, women-owned, or support disadvantaged communities.

Community Impact

The procurement process will consider the potential social impact on the communities we serve, aiming to create positive outcomes for local populations.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure the effectiveness and integrity of its procurement processes, Europe Cares commits to rigorous monitoring and evaluation practices.

Ongoing Monitoring

The Field Coordinator and Project Coordinator are responsible for the continuous monitoring of procurement activities to verify adherence to this policy and identify areas for improvement.

Evaluation Metrics

Key performance indicators that are applicable to the relevant context will be established to evaluate the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and quality of procurement outcomes, as well as the satisfaction of stakeholders.

Regular Reporting

At the end of every quarter (3-month planning period), the procurement activities, compliance with policy, and evaluation outcomes will be reviewed by the Head of Mission.

Corrective Actions

Should monitoring and evaluation reveal discrepancies or areas for improvement, timely corrective actions will be taken, including policy adjustments and additional staff training as needed.

Stakeholder Feedback

Feedback from staff, vendors, and partners will be systematically collected and used to inform the evaluation of procurement practices.

9. Reporting and Documentation

All procurement activities must be documented in accordance with Europe Cares' standard operating procedures. Reporting and documentation are essential for accountability in Europe Cares' procurement activities.

Documentation

Every procurement action must be recorded to create an audit trail. This includes procurement plans, supplier communications, bids, purchase orders, contracts, receipts, and dispute records.

Reporting

Reporting on procurement is included in the Weekly Field Reports by the Field Coordination and summarizes procurement activities, challenges, and budget adherence. Only procurement activities outside of the operational budget or that are relevant to exceeded budget items must be included in the weekly report.

Record Retention

Records are kept as per legal requirements or until their audit relevance ends, in secure storage accessible only to authorized personnel.

Access and Review

Stakeholders may access records following confidentiality policies. Documentation practices will be regularly reviewed for improvement.

10. Review and Improvement

Europe Cares is committed to the continuous enhancement of its procurement processes to ensure effectiveness, efficiency, and alignment with its mission and values.

Regular Review

The Procurement Policy and related procedures will be reviewed biennially or as necessitated by changes in operations, legal requirements, or best practices.

Feedback Mechanism

Feedback from staff, suppliers, and partners will be actively solicited and considered during the review process to identify areas for improvement.

Policy Updates

Any amendments to the policy will be documented and communicated to all relevant parties, ensuring that changes are understood and implemented effectively.

Training on Updates

Staff will receive communication and training on any new procurement procedures to ensure consistency and compliance across the organization.

11. Dispute Resolution

This section will outline the steps to address disputes related to procurement.

In the event of a dispute arising from the procurement process or related contractual agreements, Europe Cares is committed to resolving issues in an efficient, fair, and timely manner. The following steps outline the dispute resolution process:

Initial Resolution Attempt

Parties to the dispute should first attempt to resolve the issue informally through direct discussion. If initial discussions do not resolve the issue, the aggrieved party must submit a formal written complaint to the Head of Mission.

Formal Complaint

The formal complaint should detail the nature of the dispute, the parties involved, and any relevant documentation. The Head of Mission will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 3 working days.

Investigation

The Head of Mission will conduct a thorough investigation into the complaint, ensuring that all parties have an opportunity to present their case. The investigation will be completed within 30 days of acknowledging the complaint.

Resolution

Upon completion of the investigation, the Procurement Committee will propose a resolution. The resolution will be communicated in writing to all parties involved.

Escalation

If the proposed resolution is not accepted by all parties, the dispute may be escalated to the Board of Directors of Europe Cares. The Board will review the dispute and make a final decision within 15 working days.

External Arbitration

In cases where a resolution cannot be reached internally, the parties may agree to engage in external arbitration. The arbitration will be conducted in accordance with the rules and

procedures of an agreed-upon arbitration body. The decision of the arbitration shall be considered final and binding on all parties.

Legal Action

As a last resort, parties may seek resolution through legal action in accordance with the jurisdictional laws where Europe Cares operates. Legal action should only be considered when all other avenues for resolution have been exhausted.

Documentation

Detailed records of all disputes and the steps taken to resolve them is to be maintained by Europe Cares. These records will be treated as confidential and will be stored securely.

Policy Review

The effectiveness of the dispute resolution process will be reviewed regularly, and improvements will be made as necessary.

Communication

All communication regarding the dispute resolution process should be directed to: board@europecares.org

12. Emergency Procurement

Europe Cares recognizes that emergencies may necessitate deviations from standard procurement procedures to ensure a rapid response.

Definition of Emergency

An emergency is defined as an unforeseen situation that poses an immediate risk to health, life, property, or environment and requires urgent action.

Authority in Emergencies

In an emergency, the Procurement Committee or designated authority may approve procurement methods that expedite the process to address the urgent need.

Documentation and Justification

All emergency procurements must be documented, including a justification for the deviation from standard procedures.

Limits and Oversight

Emergency procurement should be limited to the goods and services necessary to address the emergency. Oversight mechanisms will ensure accountability and prevent abuse of the process.

Post-Emergency Review

Following an emergency procurement, a review will be conducted by the Head of Mission to assess the decision-making process and the outcomes, and to identify lessons learned for future emergencies.

13. Donor Requirements

Europe Cares acknowledges the importance of adhering to the specific procurement guidelines set forth by our donors.

Compliance with Donor Guidelines

All procurement activities shall comply with the respective terms and conditions stipulated by donors, which may include specific procurement procedures, reporting, and documentation standards.

Documentation of Donor Restrictions

Any restrictions or requirements from donors that affect procurement practices will be documented and communicated to all staff involved in the procurement process.

Audit and Reporting

Europe Cares will facilitate audits by donors as required and will ensure that all necessary procurement-related information is available for donor reporting.

Alignment with Mission

While adhering to donor requirements, procurement practices will remain aligned with the mission and ethical standards of Europe Cares.

14. Legal Compliance

Europe Cares is committed to conducting its procurement activities in full compliance with the applicable laws and regulations of the countries in which it operates. All procurement will comply with applicable laws and regulations in the jurisdictions where Europe Cares operates.

Adherence to Laws and Regulations

All procurement procedures will adhere to local, national, and international legal standards, ensuring that all transactions are lawful and ethical.

Regular Legal Review

Procurement policies and practices will be regularly reviewed in cooperation with the external accountant to ensure ongoing compliance with changing laws and regulations.

Reporting Non-Compliance

Any instances of non-compliance or potential legal issues identified by staff must be reported immediately to the Board of Directors and Head of Mission.

15. Approval and Amendments

This Policy is approved by the Board of Directors and may only be amended with the Board's approval.

Contact Information

For any inquiries regarding this Policy, please contact:

Field Coordination field@europecares.org

Board of Directors board@europecares.org