

Expansion of simap.ch

Major changes are under way for the public procurement portal simap.ch. The introduction of bidder profiles and standard forms for bidder data represents the next step towards a fully electronic tendering process, from the invitation to tender to the submission and selection of bids.

simap.ch is an electronic platform shared by federal, cantonal and communal procurement authorities. Most of the public procurement notices and many of the contract award notices are now being published through this portal. The documents that are needed participate in these calls to tender can usually be downloaded from simap.ch too.

As proposed in eGovernment Switzerland's priority project program, business entities should be able to download information about public-sector tenders and submit bids for these tenders electronically. In order to realize these goals with the requisite level of security and ensure that contractors submitting bids can be identified beyond doubt, some modifications must be made to the existing platform. In the pending expansion of simap, bidder profiles and standardized forms will be introduced. The upload function will be upgraded at a later point in time to enable users to submit bids electronically. The new features described below will be available for use from March 2014. Electronic bid submission will be activated in 2015 at the earliest.

New bidder profiles

The introduction of new bidder profiles will facilitate the provision of reliable bidder-specific data. They will also be better attuned to the needs of large companies as well as SMEs.

Due to the introduction of the new bidder profiles, business entities and simap.ch users who want to bid for projects must **re-register**. The address data of the business entities will be retrieved from the UID register¹ during this registration process and updated afterwards on a daily basis. The registration must be performed by each company's designated future administrator. Other users at the company, such as project managers or business acquisition managers, can be added to the bidder profile and assigned certain authorizations such as "contact person" or "administrator". Bidder profiles and user administration features can only be managed and changed by administrators. Contact persons will also be able to bid for projects. Companies with subsidiaries that are registered in the commercial registry may choose whether they want to set up one central bidder profile or a separate bidder profile for

¹ The commercial registry number (CH number) and the six-digit VAT number were replaced as company-specific identifiers as of the beginning of this year. For further information (in German, French and Italian only) click on the following link: Medienmitteilung zum Stand der Einführung der Unternehmens-Identifikationsnummer : <http://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/de/index/news/medienmitteilungen.html?pressID=9293>.

every subsidiary that has its own UID. The **training platform** of simap.ch will be available from March on to give companies an opportunity to assess which choice is best for them. Companies can apply for additional UIDs for individual subsidiaries or profit centers through the SFSO.

Contractors can enter additional information about their company, e.g. CPV and BKP codes or certificates, in their bidder profiles. This data will be automatically published in simap.ch's directory of bidders and will allow procurement authorities to screen for specific companies when calling for tenders.

During a **2-month transition period**, the old bidder profiles can be used as before. After this transition period, all new bids for projects must be made with the new bidder profile. It will still be possible to access the system to manage previously submitted bids under the old user profiles.

New standard form Bidder data

This standard form is intended to promote the standardization of bidder data and to make it easier for companies to enter such information into the system.

Besides address details, the standard bidder data form contains additional information about a company (e.g. legal structure, number of employees, sales revenues, collective employment agreement...), its bidding qualifications (confirmation that certain eligibility requirements for public sector tenders have been met) and verification documents.

The following steps are designed to support the interplay between the contract-awarding procurement authorities and the bidding companies when using the standard bidder data form:

- The simap.ch Association defines the standard bidder data
- Bidders enter the required data in their bidder profiles
- Procurement authorities determine which data are relevant on a project-by-project basis
- The data given in the bidder profile and related documents can be exported to the standard form when preparing a bid and then cross-checked and supplemented if necessary.
- The system automatically creates the corresponding forms for bidders as a PDF or Excel file.

Additional information is available at the simap.ch platform.