European wide call by Stiftung Warentest
for an expression of interest to be commissioned to carry out investigations

In fulfilment of its remit as specified in its statutes, Stiftung Warentest, which is a non-profit making foundation under civil law established by the Federal Republic of Germany in 1964, carries out investigations of goods and services, as a rule of a comparative nature. The general public is informed of the results of the investigations by publication in the magazines test and Finanztest, which the Foundation issues and publishes, as well as on its website (www.test.de).

**Products** from the following topic areas are investigated regularly:

- Consumer electronics
- Optics
- IT
- Telecommunications
- Large and small household appliances
- Home products (e.g. boilers, light bulbs)
- Do-it-yourself and garden products
- Sports equipment
- Furniture (including mattresses)
- Clothing
- Vehicles and vehicle accessories (e.g. bicycles, bicycle and car accessories)
- Children's products
- Detergents and cleaning agents
- Medical products
- Foodstuffs
- Cosmetics

Typical test aspects, which are of course dependent on the investigated product, include among others:

- Function (measurements and user panel tests)
- Convenience, use (including an assessment of the user instructions)
- Safety (electrical, mechanical and thermal safety)
- Chemical tests
- Microbiological tests
- Endurance (life and stress)
- Environmental aspects (water and energy consumption, noise, pollutants)
- Labelling
- Sensory tests of foodstuffs

In addition, Stiftung Warentest regularly investigates **services** among other things in the topic areas

- Investment and insurance
- Mortgages and loans
- Travelling and tourism
- Telecommunications
- IT
- Health and social issues
- Commercial and customer services
- Further education and training

The main focus is thereby placed on the following investigative procedures:

- Field studies: covert investigations (mystery research) making use of services (e.g. personally, on the phone or via the Internet)
- Inspections
- Analysis and appraisal of documents by experts
- Website analyses
- Security of data transfer via the Internet
- Analysis based on perceptual psychology of the contents of information texts, especially in printed or electronic form

Finally, in addition to the quality of products or services, the social and environmental responsibility of the manufacturers/providers (CSR tests) is also investigated in the case of approximately three investigations a year. Within this framework, both the company headquarters and the production sites are inspected by suitable experts.

**In order to extend its knowledge of the market, Stiftung Warentest calls upon all competent and independent test institutes with relevant experience to submit an expression of interest, if they have an interest in being commissioned to carry out such comparative investigations and also the available sufficient capacity to do so. This call for an expression of interest does not apply to institutes which already work together with Stiftung Warentest.**

It is required that the interested parties guarantee to investigate the test criteria, which are specified by Stiftung Warentest in a test/investigation programme, using defined methods, typically of between 10 and 30 test samples or service providers, and within a fixed, often short period of time that is to be agreed on beforehand. The results shall be summarised and commented on by the test institute in an expert's report, Stiftung Warentest shall however take responsibility both for the evaluation of the results and expressing them as ratings/verdicts. Furthermore, it is expected that the test institute will be available at short notice to carry out any necessary repeat tests, as well as to defend the investigation results, should there be any disputes with the manufacturers/providers.

Stiftung Warentest attributes great importance to the independence of the test institutes it commissions. For this reason, institutes are required to answer the following questions when expressing their interest in being commissioned to carry out investigations of products and services for Stiftung Warentest:

1. **Institute**
   What is the legal form of your institute (e.g. limited company, public limited company, partnership, limited partnership, foundation, registered association etc.)? What are the names of the legal / contractual representatives? What are the names of the members of the institute's organs? If it is a legal person, please also name the deputy. What are the institute's shareholding structures? In the case of associations, please give details of the member structure, especially with regard to members who offer the products and services.

2. **Authorised beneficiaries**
   Who is the authorised beneficiary of your institute (in accordance with § 3 section 1 no. 3 of the Money Laundering Law? The authorised beneficiary is the natural person or the natural persons, who own or control the institute. Such control exists if a natural person directly or indirectly holds more than 25% of the capital shares, or controls more than 25% of the voting rights.

3. **Clients**
   Did more than 30 % of the turnover of your institute come from one client in the last financial year or in the last three financial years? If so, please give details about this client (e.g. branch, investigated product group)?

4. **Miscellaneous**
   Are there any other relationships between your institute and manufacturers or providers offering the products or services which go beyond normal commissioned activity and could be of relevance to the assessment of your neutrality?
Each time a test contract is accepted, a declaration of neutrality must be made. Details of the relevant requirements are given at www.test.de/neutralitaetsverpflichtung.

Should you wish to express your interest in being commissioned to carry out such work for Stiftung Warentest, please send an informative description of your technical and personnel capacity and capabilities (especially details of the available test equipment and facilities, capacities, the qualifications of your personnel, accreditation and references) only to

Dr. Holger Brackemann  
Research Division  
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Lützowplatz 11 – 13  
10785 Berlin  
Germany

After the submitted documents have been evaluated, suitable test institutes can then be considered for inclusion when contracts for future planned projects are awarded.

The call for an expression of interest is not a formal award procedure in accordance with the regulations of §§ 97 ff. Act Against Restraint of Competition (Gesetz gegen Wettbewerbsbeschränkungen), the Regulation for Awarding Contracts (Vergabeverordnung), the General Terms and Conditions Applicable to Contracts (Verdingungsordnung allgemeiner Bestimmung für die Vergabe von Leistungen und Bauleistung VOL/A) or other rules and regulations of public procurement law.

Costs incurred by participating in the call for interest shall not be reimbursed.

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