Vatican
Vatican News
The dome of St. Peter's Basilica is visible through an arched window in a stone wall

The dome of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican is seen from the Aventine Hill in Rome in this May 2, 2018, file photo. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

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Vatican City — January 16, 2024
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Continuing the long-running updating of laws and norms regarding Vatican expenditures and processes for awarding contracts, Pope Francis issued two documents Jan. 16.

The shorter document, on "the limits and modalities of ordinary administration," said that when an expenditure does not exceed 150,000 euros (about $163,000) or amounts to less than 2% of the office's average annual budget for the past three years, the expenditure does not require the approval of the prefect of the Secretariat of the Economy.

The other document, which is much longer, is an updating of the 2020 "Norms on Transparency, Control and Competition of Public Contracts of the Holy See and Vatican City State."

Included in the update is an expansion of the list of people and companies with which Vatican offices are not allowed to sign contracts.

Excluded from bidding on Vatican jobs are those: who have committed "serious violations" of the obligation to pay taxes; who have been found "in breach of obligations relating to the protection of the health and safety of workers, according to the law or applicable collective agreements"; and those who are "resident or established in jurisdictions with a high risk of money laundering, financing of terrorism and/or proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as identified by [Vatican] Supervisory and Financial Information Authority in the performance of its institutional activities."

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In his document on the ordinary administration of Vatican and curial offices, Francis said the new norms "represent an objective application of the principle of subsidiarity in the management of the temporal goods of the Apostolic See."

"This principle, on the one hand, guarantees a healthy autonomy of the entities supervised, which must act with the 'diligence of a good householder' and, on the other hand, allows the authorities in charge of control and supervision to fulfill their own institutional functions," the pope wrote.

Excluding purchases below a certain limit, he said, will promote "the flexibility, dynamism and transparent efficiency" of Vatican offices.

The expanded law for awarding contracts repeats that the regulations are issued in accordance "with the social doctrine of the church and the fundamental principles of the legal system of the Holy See and Vatican City State," but it adds that they also must be in harmony with the principles set out in Francis' 2015 encyclical "Laudato Si', On Care for Our Common Home."