

Call for tenders' details

Title: Live Speech to Text and Machine Translation Tool for 24 Languages

Start date: 06/08/2019

Time limit for receipt of tenders:

Contracting authority: European Parliament, DG Translation

Status: Open

Call for tenders question list

| # | Submission date | Publication date | Question subject | Question | Answer |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | 11/08/2019 19:46 | 19/08/2019 16:40 | Selection Criterium 14.2 | In the case of a consortium submitting a tender, must the minimum turnover of EUR 3.000.000 for the last three financial years be met by the consortium as a whole, or by every consortium member individually? Also, must the minimum turnover of 3 Mio EUR be reached for every year of the last financial three years, or must the sum of the turnover of the last three financial in sum reach at least that amount? | 19/08/2019 Thank you for your question. The minimum turnover of EUR 3.000.000 for the last three financial years should be met by the consortium as a whole. The minimum turnover of 3 Mio EUR should be reached over the last three financial years (sum of the last three years) |
| 2 | 11/08/2019 20:15 | 19/08/2019 16:41 | Definition of Economic Operator | Does the term economic operator also include universities? In other words, are universities also eligible for submitting a tender, especially when being part of a group of economic operators? | 19/08/2019 Thank you for your question. Universities can be considered as economic operators and therefore are eligible for submitting a tender. |

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| 3 | 21/08/2019 15:31 | 28/08/2019 14:06 | Real-time volume | <p>In order to estimate workload, system capacity and availability, we would need some figures regarding expected volumes for speech-to-text and translation. Could the EP kindly share the anticipated number of hours per month of raw input (voice) to be transcribed and translated in real time please? Any other numbers regarding current performance figures (by human interpreters) would also help a great deal. Thank you in advance.</p> | <p>28/08/2019 The purpose of the contract is to provide in the first place transcription and translation services for plenary debates. As a general rule, the European Parliament meets for 12 plenary sittings a year in Strasbourg. Each of these sessions lasts for four days (from Monday to Thursday). Additional part-sessions are held in Brussels. The exact number of days and length of the sittings in hours varies depending on the political agenda of the Institution and the issues that are debated, therefore an exact amount of the input per month to be transcribed and translated is hard to estimate. As an example, plenary sessions were held on 54 days in 2018 and 51 days in 2019. The calendar of plenary sessions is available on the website of the European Parliament (http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/meetings-search.html – see section "Parliament's calendar" in the right side menu). Please also see chapter 4 of the Technical Specifications which contains a rough estimation of the volume of audio recordings per language from past plenary sessions which can give an indication of the raw input to be handled per language. Original speeches, interpretation and verbatim</p> |

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| | | | | | <p>speeches, interpretation and verbatim records can be found here: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/debates-video.html?tabActif=tabLast#sidesForm</p> <p>30/08/2019</p> <p>In order to avoid any confusion with existing transcription services in the European Parliament, the European Parliament wants to clarify that the purpose of the contract is to provide in the first place "automatic live" transcription and "machine translation" services for plenary debates.</p> |

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| 4 | 24/08/2019 16:10 | 28/08/2019 14:12 | Session, Session length, language weight | Can you please give an indication of the number of parliamentary sessions, the locations and the expected duration of each session that will be in scope of this innovation partnership? We would like to get an indication on what percentage of time each of the individual 24 languages is spoken in relationship to the total number of hours of the meetings that are in scope Thank you! | <p>28/08/2019</p> <p>The purpose of the contract is to provide in the first place transcription and translation services for plenary debates. As a general rule, the European Parliament meets for 12 plenary sittings a year in Strasbourg. Each of these sessions lasts for four days (from Monday to Thursday). Additional part-sessions are held in Brussels. The exact number of days and length of the sittings in hours varies depending on the political agenda of the Institution and the issues that are debated, therefore an exact amount of the input per month to be transcribed and translated is hard to estimate. As an example, plenary sessions were held on 54 days in 2018 and 51 days in 2019. The calendar of plenary sessions is available on the website of the European Parliament (http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/meetings-search.html – see section "Parliament's calendar" in the right side menu). Please also see chapter 4 of the Technical Specifications which contains a rough estimation of the volume of audio recordings per language from past plenary sessions which can give an indication of the raw input to be handled per language. Original speeches, interpretation and verbatim</p> |

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| | | | | | <p>speeches, interpretation and verbatim records can be found here: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/debates-video.html?tabActif=tabLast#sidesForm</p> <p>02/09/2019 In order to avoid any confusion with existing transcription services in the European Parliament, the European Parliament wants to clarify that the purpose of the contract is to provide in the first place "automatic live" transcription and "machine translation" services for plenary debates.</p> |
| 5 | 27/08/2019 15:27 | 28/08/2019 14:27 | Professional/ Trade Register | <p>Professional/ Trade Register - With regards to the point "14.1. Legal and regulatory capacity" in the Specifications document - "The tenderer is required to be enrolled in a relevant professional or trade register, except for international organisations." Please confirm on which Professional or Trade Register should a Maltese company based in Malta be enrolled on?</p> | <p>28/08/2019 You should provide any document proving the status of your company in Malta, showing the registration details (number, legal representative, place of establishment, etc.).</p> |

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| 6 | 28/08/2019 16:25 | 02/09/2019 17:44 | Audio and video system integration ? | Can you provide information on the EP's Audio and video systems in relationship with the expected integration with those systems ? | 02/09/2019 As explained under "3.7. Technical setup, hosting and integration with existing IT environment" the tenderer should provide the necessary web services and Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) to make integration with the European Parliament's IT systems feasible. A close integration with the European Parliament's audio and video systems is not foreseen in the scope of this contract. |
| 7 | 28/08/2019 16:26 | 02/09/2019 17:45 | Audio integration | Can you provide information on how the live audio is fed to the transcription and translation system? | 02/09/2019 The technical solution to feed the live audio to the transcription and translation system will be proposed by the tenderer. As indicated under "3.7. Technical setup, hosting and integration with existing IT environment", the tenderer has the possibility, if needed, to install additional hardware in the premises of the European Parliament. The total cost of these operations will be covered by the tenderer. |

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| 8 | 28/08/2019 16:27 | 02/09/2019 17:46 | Citizens experience | Are the citizens following the proceeding receiving video and audio together with the transcript? Or is this a separate system? Can you provide more details on how this works and interrelates ? | 02/09/2019 Citizens following the live proceeding on the website of the European Parliament (http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en) receive video and audio. The transcript is usually published the next day on the same website (http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/debates-video.html?tabActif=tabLast#sidesForm) together with recorded debates. |
| 9 | 28/08/2019 16:29 | 02/09/2019 17:46 | interpreter systems integration | What kind of integration with the EP's interpreter systems do you expect? | 02/09/2019 Although the tenderer needs to foresee in a technical solution to capture the live audio feed, an integration with existing EP's interpreter's systems is not in the scope of the project. |

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| 10 | 04/09/2019 11:26 | 06/09/2019 12:23 | Submission of candidature | <p>Question 1: Can the European Parliament confirm that by submitting our candidature by applying to the "First step of the procurement procedure we will only be bound to: Annex I: Declaration on the tenderer's honour concerning the exclusion and selection criteria; Annex II: Financial identification form; Annex IV: Information sheet concerning groups of economic operators (if applicable); Annex V: Declaration concerning subcontractors (if applicable); Documents proving selection criteria described in point: ► 14.1. Legal and regulatory capacity, ► 14.2. Financial and economic capacity, ► 14.3. Technical and professional capacity - Compliance to the minimum requirements.</p> <p>=====</p> <p>Question 2: Can the European Parliament confirm that submission of candidature will NOT yet generate any obligations as outlined in the DRAFT FRAMEWORK SERVICE CONTRACT - EP/TRAD/2019 LSTT</p> | <p>06/09/2019</p> <p>Answer to Q1: Indeed, the European Parliament confirms that the documents to be provided by the candidates for the first step of the procedure (exclusion and selection) are the following as mentioned in the contract notice and described hereunder: Annex I: Declaration on the tenderer's honour concerning the exclusion and selection criteria; Annex II: Financial identification form; Annex IV: Information sheet concerning groups of economic operators (if applicable); Annex V: Declaration concerning subcontractors (if applicable); Documents proving selection criteria described in point: 14.1. Legal and regulatory capacity, 14.2. Financial and economic capacity, 14.3. Technical and professional capacity - compliance to the minimum requirements. All candidates who submit the above documents will be evaluated against the exclusion criteria (point 13) and selection criteria (point 14) of the specifications. Please note that annexes to the specifications need to be duly dated and signed. Answer to Q2: The submission of a candidature will not generate any obligations as mentioned in the Invitation to tender under the chapter "GENERAL</p> |

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| | | | | | under the chapter "GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE INVITATION TO TENDER", paragraphs 1 and 6. |
| 11 | 04/09/2019 11:30 | 06/09/2019 12:26 | Continuation of the prototype after Year 1 | The provided invitation and specifications provide provisions for the continuation of the prototype after Year 1. The contraction authority describes the termination options for the European Parliament. Question: Can the Solutions Provider(s) working on the prototype in Year 1, decide himself to terminate his engagement after Year 1? If yes what are the process and terms to step out after Year 1? | 06/09/2019 Indeed, a provider working on stage 1 might decide himself to terminate his engagement after year 1. Process and terms to step out are described in article I.2 of the draft contract: ARTICLE I.2 – DURATION 1. This contract shall enter into force on the date on which it is signed by the last contracting party and shall run for a first period of three months. 2. The contract shall be renewed tacitly on the basis of three-month periods but its duration may not exceed 36 months from the date of its entry into force as specified in the preceding paragraph, unless one of the parties' objects thereto by registered letter sent at least one month before the expiry of the renewal date. Such renewal shall not entail any modification or deferment of existing obligations. |

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| 12 | 12/09/2019 08:51 | 12/09/2019 11:23 | Group of Economic operators establishment | <p>In order to apply as a Group of Economic Operators, is it sufficient for the group members to sign a partner agreement for the purpose of this tender between themselves (an entity without legal personality by way of partnership), signed by the legal representatives of the members and indicating person of contact/group representative? Or does the agreement also need to be registered and signed by a notary for validation?</p> | <p>12/09/2019 Please see, point 4 of the specifications. GROUPS OF ECONOMIC OPERATORS The group's actual status should be established by any document or agreement signed by the legal representatives of the members of the group, which should be appended to the tender. Tenders from groups of economic operators must specify the role, qualifications and experience of each of the members of the group. The tender shall be submitted jointly by the economic operators, who shall also assume joint and several liability for the tender submission. Each member shall furnish proof of right of access to the contract (eligibility), as well as proof concerning compliance with the exclusion and selection criteria. With regard to the selection criteria, the European Parliament may rely on the capacity of the other members of the group in order to establish whether the tenderer will have the resources needed to perform the contract. In this case an undertaking shall be required from members stating that they will make available to the other members the resources needed to perform the contract. The group of economic operators shall provide proof of its legal form by the time the contract - if</p> |

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| | | | | | legal form by the time the contract - if awarded to it - is signed. |
| 13 | 12/09/2019 15:12 | 13/09/2019 13:59 | Deadline for submission of candidatures | Given the summer release date of this tender, we experienced shortage of key resources in our organization to fully access the scope and requirements of this very innovative partnership tender, as such we would like to ask a two weeks extension for the submission of our candidature. Thank you in advance for your understanding. | 13/09/2019 The European Parliament decided to postpone the delivery date of the candidature to 14/10/2019 - 12:00 if handed. New deadline for receiving requests for additional information: 7 October 2019. New deadline for sending replies: 11 October 2019. A corrigendum will be soon published in E-Notice. |
| 14 | 09/09/2019 11:43 | 16/09/2019 18:09 | IP and licensing issues | In regards to point 5 of the Specifications documents (IP and licensing issues) can you please clarify if the European Parliament would have the right to modify, further develop, extend and sub-license components that are part of the solution, but not specifically created for this project, such as deep learning algorithms that make up the language and translation models and other components are subject to the vendors' IP. | 16/09/2019 The European Parliament will not have the right to modify, further develop, extend and sub-license components that are part of the solution, but were not specifically created for this project. Should such a need arise in future, the European Parliament may negotiate separate agreements with the vendor. |

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| 15 | 09/09/2019 12:07 | 16/09/2019 18:10 | Extension and modification of the SaaS solution | In Annex VII, section 3.7 it is mentioned that the software solution will be acquired as SaaS. How will the European Parliament envision the modification, further development and extending such Software as a Service platform, as mentioned in the "IP & Licensing issues" section? | 16/09/2019 The modification, further development and extending of the Software as a Service platform will not be part of this contract. As mentioned in Annex VII, section 5 of the specifications, separate contracts will be concluded for maintenance, support and possible infrastructure/hosting costs as required and/or for further development. |
| 16 | 13/09/2019 11:56 | 16/09/2019 18:10 | Commercial License | Does the European Parliament agree that the tool and any of its components and software can be used by the successful awardee for commercial purposes outside of the non-commercial purposes linked to its public mission? | 16/09/2019 As mentioned in Annex VII, section 5 of the specifications, the European Parliament should be granted a non-exclusive licence over the results and rights obtained in performance of the contract. This implies that the successful awardee can use the tool and any of its components and software for commercial purposes. |

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| 17 | 16/09/2019 10:16 | 17/09/2019 13:56 | Usage of Google Cloud based solution | <p>Dear team, we strongly believe in Google Cloud Platform being currently the best fit for your particular needs. Our plan is to build a tailor-made cloud-based SaaS solution to cover all aspects of your demand. We propose to deploy the solution on Google's industry-leading cloud infrastructure and use Google's state-of-the-art speech transcription and translation technology to deliver uncompromising results. As part of this tender we will provide this solution in flat fee mode (Google API calls included in this flat fee). After the expiration of the initial contract, however, we will need to enter into a separate contract with the European Parliament for further maintenance, support and infrastructure costs. Q: May we consider the usage of Google Cloud Platform (and Google Speech APIs in particular, as they deliver the core functionality of the service) as part of the maintenance/infrastructure cost under the terms of the tender?</p> | <p>17/09/2019 The technical solutions proposed by the tenderer should meet the requirements as defined in the Technical Specification document (see Annex VII of the specifications). The requirements related to cloud services are detailed more specifically under point 3.7 (Technical setup, hosting and integration with existing IT environment). The technical solutions proposed and the financial offers will be evaluated during the award procedure.</p> |

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| 18 | 12/09/2019 13:10 | 18/09/2019 10:42 | Group of Economic Operators which included a member of the group based in the UK | With regards to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, in case such access is not provided by the legal provisions in force after the withdrawal, would the European Parliament exclude from the procurement procedure a Group of Economic Operators which included a member of the group based in the UK? | <p>18/09/2019</p> <p>It is our understanding that the deadline for submitting a tender in your case is before Brexit, which means that UK based companies might submit a tender, both alone and as member of a consortium. On the other hand, as the award and the signature of the contract will probably take place after Brexit date, in case of a hard Brexit, the UK member of the consortium will not fulfil the accessibility criteria for tendering anymore. Our understanding is that the members of the consortium, as a general rule, shall remain the same during the whole procedure and even during the contract execution. This would also imply that the non-qualification of one member of the consortium would disqualify the whole consortium. The only possibility to save the tender in this case is when the members of the consortium, even without the UK company, would be able to fulfil all selection and award criteria, the UK based company is not presented as member performing critical tasks and the contract would have been awarded to this consortium even without taking into consideration the experience, capacity, etc. of the UK-based member of the group. On the basis of the offer received, the authorising officer service will have to</p> |

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| | | | | | authorising officer service will have to justify why the member in question is not performing critical tasks and that the contract could be awarded without taking into account the participation of the UK based company. If all e above criteria are met, we can imagine a situation that the UK-based member of the consortium withdraws and the contract is still awarded to the consortium. However, evidently, no case law exists on this is issue and therefore this answer is also only a hypothetical solution. |
| 19 | 17/09/2019 13:31 | 18/09/2019 11:06 | Question time | We were wondering if, after the selection phase, before tendering, we will again have the opportunity to submit questions. Thank you. | 18/09/2019 Selected candidates will have the opportunity to submit questions before tendering. Details will be provided with the letter providing the results of Step 1 of the procedure and inviting selected candidates to submit a tender for Step 2 of the procedure. |

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| 20 | 13/09/2019 12:02 | 18/09/2019 11:52 | Turnover relating to the services associated with the field | With regards to turnover relating to the services associated with the field, what would be the minimum acceptable turnover expected over the last three financial years? | 18/09/2019 No minimum turnover relating to the services associated with the field is required. However, the candidates are requested in point 14.3. Technical and professional capacity of the specifications, to prove at least an experience in the field of research and development and of developing and implementing solutions similar to those required by the contract.Question1 |
| 21 | 19/09/2019 18:02 | 20/09/2019 11:18 | Deadline for submission of candidatures | With reference to the change of deadline, when do you foresee the publication of the corrigendum with the new dates? Thank you. | 20/09/2019 A corrigendum was published on e notice on 18 September. Notice number in the OJ S : 2019/S 180-437498. A corrigendum of the Invitation to tender was added today to the list of documents for this tender. |

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