

Call for tenders' details

Title: Framework Contract for Services of the Policy Support Facility (PSF)

Start date: 27/01/2020

Time limit for receipt of tenders: 05/03/2020

Contracting authority: European Commission, DG Research and Innovation (RTD)

Status: Closed

Call for tenders question list

Call for tenders questions summary

#	Submission date	Publication date	Question subject	Question	Answer
1	08/02/2020 12:56	18/02/2020 10:28	Independent experts - externally recruited and in-house experts	In section 1.4.2.2 of the tender specifications, bullet point b) Typology of experts for PSF Activities, 1)Independent experts, it is written: " The experts proposed by the contractor can be either externally recruited or in-house experts (i.e. employed by the contractor) providing that the number of externally recruited experts remains always higher than the number of in-house experts." May you please confirm that, in case of a joint tender, the contracting authority will consider as "in-house experts" only the staff employed by the leader and the partners? or will the contracting authority consider as "in-house experts" also the staff employed by identified subcontractors?	18/02/2020 In case of a contract with a joint tenderer, the contracting authority will consider as "in-house experts" only the staff employed by the leader and the partners of the consortia. Staff employed by identified subcontractors will not be considered as "in-house experts". Please note that this provision does not limit the different ways to submit a tender. Please note that different ways to submit a tender are described in Section 2.4. of the tender specifications.

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2	04/02/2020 09:13	18/02/2020 10:29	Number of References to be submitted	What is the maximum amount of references which can be submitted?	18/02/2020 We understand that you are referring to the 'project references' mentioned in selection criterion E1 and E2. Please note that the Contracting Authority defined only the minimum number ('at least') of references as referred to in criteria E1 and E2, in the Tender specification's Section 3.2.3. of the Call for Tenders. Please note that according to the Section 3.2.3 and Annex I of the Tender Specifications, evidence of the technical and professional capacity does not need to be provided with the tender but may be requested by the Contracting Authority at any time during the procedure.

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3	04/02/2020 09:14	18/02/2020 10:31	Qualifying References - Location of Implementation	Can we receive the full list of the countries in which the qualifying references could have been implemented?	18/02/2020 We understand that you are referring to the 'project references' mentioned in selection criterion E1 and E2. For the Criterion E1 the projects of which references have been requested have to be implemented in the Member States of the European Union and associated countries to Horizon 2020, as clearly mentioned in the Criteria E1 (section 3.2.3. of the Tender Specifications of the Calls for Tenders). For the list of the countries you can refer to Annex 6. Section 3 Table 1 of the Tender specifications of the Call for Tenders. For the Criterion E2, experience in designing and implementing Communicaton and dissemination strategies related to public policy is accepted beyond EU Member States and Associated Countries to Horizon 2020. Please note that according to the Section 3.2.3 and Annex I of the Tender Specifications, evidence of the technical and professional capacity does not need to be provided with the tender but may be requested by the Contracting Authority at any time during the procedure.

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4	06/02/2020 17:08	18/02/2020 10:33	Criterion E1	In the ToR, in the section 3.2.3. Technical and professional capacity, for the criterion E1, it is indicated that "This criterion applies to the tenderer as a whole, i.e. the combined capacities of all involved entities". Can you please specify if the references provided by the subcontractors are accepted? Or shall we present only the references from the member of the consortium (leader + partners)?	18/02/2020 "This criterion applies to the tenderer as a whole, i.e. the combined capacities of all involved entities" (Section 3.2.3 of the Tender Specifications). For the different ways on how tenderers can organise themselves to submit a tender and applicable rules please see Section 2.4. of the Tender Specifications. Please note that as indicated in Section 2.4. of the tender specifications "In order to fulfil the selection criteria set out in Section 3.2 the tenderer can rely on the capacities of subcontractors or other entities (not subcontractors)." Please also note that according to the Section 3.2.3 and Annex I of the Tender Specifications "The evidence of technical and professional capacity does need not be provided with the tender but may be requested by the Contracting authority at any time during the procedure.

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5	06/02/2020 12:12	18/02/2020 10:35	criterion E1	In the section Technical and professional capacity, for the criterion E1, it is required to indicate at least 15 projects, with a value of minimum 80 000 €; could you please clarify if we can indicate projects in which we or our partners were subcontractors/not leading partners but still received at least EUR 80,000 of the total contract value? Or only the projects for which the entity was the leader?	18/02/2020 The tenderer must prove experience as described in the description of the selection criteria E1 and demonstrate a minimum capacity level: at least 15 similar projects (in scope and complexity) completed in the last three years preceding the tender submission deadline with a minimum value for each of them € 80 000. It is not necessary that the tenderer was the leader in the projects if it can prove requested capacity level. Please note that the criterion applies to the tenderer as a whole (combined capacities of all involved entities). Please also note that the evidence of technical and professional capacity does need not be provided with the tender but may be requested by the Contracting authority at any time during the procedure.

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6	07/02/2020 11:38	18/02/2020 11:14	Criterion E1	<p>We have a question regarding the requirement for criterion E1 “ The tenderer must prove experience in the field of expert advice concerning the design, implementation and evaluation of research and innovation policy reform in EU MS/AC to Horizon 2020”. Such a specific requirement, in a so limited market will exclude strong consortia with complementing capabilities in both policy reforms and design, implementation and evaluation of research and innovation (R&I) projects. This will consecutively prevent fair competition. In order to have a fair competition as we know there is only few consultants in the market who has experience in research and innovation (R&I) policy reforms , we advise that this requirement should be interpreted as “experience in the field of design, implementation and evaluation of research and innovation projects and experience in policy reforms (regardless of the sector)” In this case we also would like to advise an extension of the deadline for two more weeks.</p>	<p>18/02/2020</p> <p>The scope of the criterion of E1 is directly linked to the scope and objective of the call for tender, which is to support Member States and Associated countries to Horizon 2020 to help them reform their research and innovation systems (see Section 1 of the tender specifications). Taking into account the scope of the call for tenders, requirements of experience in the field of expert advice in research and innovation policy reforms in the EU Member States and Associated Countries to Horizon 2020 is essential to prove adequate professional and technical capacities: this type of expertise is not interchangeable with a combination of expertise in other specific policy areas and in design, implementation and evaluation of research and innovation projects. The criterion is targeted; non-discriminatory and proportionate in the view of the subject, value and other aspects of the contract. Please also note that the criterion applies to the tenderer as a whole i.e. combined capacities on all involved entities. For different ways to submit the tender, please see Section 2.4. of the tender specifications. Please note that according to the Section 3.2.3 and Annex I of the Tender Specifications, evidence of the technical and</p>

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					evidence of the technical and professional capacity does not need to be provided with the tender but may be requested by the Contracting Authority at any time during the procedure. Considering your request to extend the deadline, please note that the submission deadline respects and exceeds the required minimum deadline and is sufficient for the tenderers to prepare their tenders.

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7	13/02/2020 09:03	18/02/2020 11:15	Criterion E1	<p>For the previous PSF, the requirement was that "The tenderer must prove experience in the field of expert advice concerning the design, implementation and evaluation of research and innovation reforms at the level of strategy, programmes or institutions with at least 8 projects (of minimal value of 70.000 € each) delivered in this field in the last three years." We do not see a rationale for restricting the competition additionally with the current requirement. Therefore, we would like to request that the requirement is revised in order to ensure fair competition.</p>	<p>18/02/2020 We would like to emphasize that the selection criteria are set for each call for tenders individually and are meant to determine whether the tenderers have the capacity necessary to implement the contract. Please note that the scope of the current call for tenders is not identical to the previous call for tender you are referring to, as new type of services are introduced and more flexibility and other changes are introduced in existing services. The total value of the contract also increased. The requirements set in the selection criterion takes into account the scope and the value of the new framework contract, as well as the nature, volume, complexity and diversity of the tasks. They also take into account our experience with the first phase of the PSF, which highlighted the critical importance of the capacity of the contractor to handle a multiplicity of PSF projects. In this context and taking notably into account the expected volume of PSF activities, proven capacity to handle at least 15 projects similar to PSF projects over the last three years is essential. Please note that according to the Section 3.2.3 and Annex I of the Tender Specifications, evidence of the technical and professional capacity does not need to be provided</p>

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					capacity does not need to be provided with the tender but may be requested by the Contracting Authority at any time during the procedure. Please also note that the criterion is applicable to the tenderer as a whole including capacities of all the involved entities.
8	17/02/2020 18:11	19/02/2020 10:19	Missing section 1.4.2.5 the “tender process for specific contract”:	Section 1.4.2.4 “description of the services” indicates that ‘Once the Contracting authority agrees with the request of the country, a request for services will be sent to the contractor (see Section 1.4.2.5.(a): Tender process for specific contracts)’. The section “1.4.2.5. Rules of payment of the experts” does not describe the tender process for specific contract. Can you please clarify the process for specific contracts? In particular, how many working days are expected between the launch of the request for service and the submission of the specific tender - in addition to the 10 working days for the signature of the specific contracts indicated in article 1.4.3 of the draft contract?	19/02/2020 Please note that there the reference in Section 1.4.2.4 should be read ‘Once the Contracting authority agrees with the request of the country, a request for services will be sent to the contractor (see Section 1.7: Tender process for specific contracts)’. It is foreseen that the contractor will have to submit its tender within 15 working days (unless otherwise specified in the requests for services).

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9	14/02/2020 16:58	19/02/2020 10:21	Communication activity	Regarding the Communication services: could you please clarify if separate RfS will be issued for Communication activities (e.g. for the updating and fine-tuning of the PSF Knowledge Centre), or if communication will be included in the RfS of the other 4 Activities?	19/02/2020 Some communication services will relate to specific PSF activities and will be included in the RfS of each activity (e.g. article summarizing the outcome of the activity, infographics on the activity). Other communication services will be cross-cutting, not related to one specific PSF activity and will be included in separate requests for communication services (e.g. brochures presenting the PSF, fine-tuning of the website, articles drawing cross-cutting lessons).
10	17/02/2020 10:21	21/02/2020 14:17	PSF Knowledge Centre	Regarding the PSF Knowledge Centre: will there be separate RfS for the updating and maintenance of the platform, or will this need to be delivered as a transversal service over the entire course of the FWC?	21/02/2020 The work to be performed by the Contractor in relation to the PSF Knowledge Centre will be specified in various Requests for Services (RfS) and the related working days will be included in the Specific Contracts. The tasks that relate to a specific PSF activity (such as the preparation of materials on a PSF activity for uploading on the PSF Knowledge Centre) will be included in the RfS of each activity. Other tasks which are cross-cutting, not related to one specific PSF activity (e.g. fine-tuning of the website), will be included in RfS on cross-cutting communication services.

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11	26/02/2020 11:23	26/02/2020 14:51	Annex 6 - VAT	In Annex 6 - Financial offer, section 2 table two, last column you ask for specification of the VAT. As the EC is exempt from VAT, are we right in the assumption that this is 0?	26/02/2020 For the rules applicable for the VAT please see Section 4.2. (page 43) last bullet point and information in the framed table.

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