

Call for tenders' details

Title: Uptake of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by SMEs and Start-ups

Start date: 10/03/2020

Time limit for receipt of tenders: 15/05/2020

Contracting authority: European Innovation Council and Small and
Medium-sized Enterprises Executive Agency (EISMEA)

Status: Closed

Call for tenders question list

Call for tenders questions summary

#	Submission date	Publication date	Question subject	Question	Answer
1	26/03/2020 15:25	31/03/2020 18:18	Regarding documents applied by qualified or an advanced electronic signature based on a qualified certificate	Please could you kindly clarify if documents applied by qualified or an advanced electronic signature based on a qualified certificate are considered as originals and we are not committed to sending them by letter? We are worried that we could not use the postal services for sending hand-signed originals according to the current situation related to the COVID-19 virus.	31/03/2020 As specified in the invitation to tender, section 1 "The following documents shall be dated and signed, either by hand or by applying a qualified or an advanced electronic signature based on a qualified certificate, by an authorised representative of the signatory: - Declaration(s) on Honour on exclusion and selection criteria (template available in the tender specifications). - The submission report (a document generated by e-Submission and listing all the documents included in the tender, to be signed by the tenderer or the group leader in case of a joint tender)." When the above documents are signed by applying a qualified or an advanced electronic signature based on a qualified certificate, in that case there is no need to send the original documents by letter to the contracting authority's postal address specified under Heading I.1.

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#	Submission date	Publication date	Question subject	Question	Answer
2	02/04/2020 09:33	02/04/2020 11:17	Participation	a. Can a British registered company be part of a consortium (as a consortium partner)? b. Can a British registered company be a subcontractor?	02/04/2020 a. Please be aware that following the entry into force of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement* on 1 February 2020 and in particular Articles 127(6), 137 and 138, the references to natural or legal persons residing or established in a Member State of the European Union are to be understood as including natural or legal persons residing or established in the United Kingdom. UK residents and entities are therefore eligible to participate under this call as tenderer/consortium member in a joint tender. * Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community b. Independently of answer a. (As specified in section 3.5. of the tender specifications "The rules of access to EU public procurement (Section 3.1) do not apply to subcontractors"), the answer is yes.

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#	Submission date	Publication date	Question subject	Question	Answer
3	02/04/2020 16:46	03/04/2020 09:55	Deadline	he COVID-19 epidemic across the European Union is forcing Governments to take drastic measures such as lockdowns and quarantines. This makes it difficult for all businesses to operate normally. This situation does not allow different companies across Europe to work in optimal conditions and to prepare and submit a qualitative offer. Therefore, we kindly ask you to take into account the current exceptional situation and extend the deadline by two-three weeks?	03/04/2020 Please be advised that the exceptional circumstances caused by the Coronavirus outbreak have been taken into account and subsequently a deadline extension for submitting the offers has been considered already. The Call for Tenders will be updated shortly.

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4	30/03/2020 19:55	03/04/2020 19:12	Work package 1 – ToR page 7 – para 1.6 General Guidance on methodology	In the ToR – page 7, para 1.6 - is noted that „This WP will be based on a desk research and on a survey addressed to SMEs and SME support organisations (SME associations, CSR/RBC support organisations, industry and sector organisations etc...) in target countries." We have a question with regard to the data collection: Is EASME going to provide the contractor with its own contacts on SMEs/facilitate the contact with support organisations in respective countries? Thank you for your response.	03/04/2020 In reply to your enquiry we would kindly guide you to note the 3rd sentence of paragraph 1.6 of the Technical Specifications : “After the approval of the questionnaires by the contracting authority, the contractor shall collect responses from SMEs also using the SME panel consultation tool of the Enterprise Europe Network”. The successful tenderer will be granted access to the consultation tool of the Enterprise Europe Network to facilitate the collection of data from SMEs. The Enterprise Europe Network is well connected in all COSME countries and can reach SMEs locally. Of course, the tenderer can also propose other tools for the data collection and can directly use its contacts in SMEs/support organisations.”
5	12/04/2020 13:40	14/04/2020 17:07	Annex 2.2: Technical Capacity Form	If applying in a consortium with one partner as the lead tenderer, do we just submit one Annex 2.2 Form which includes details from all partners involved, or does each partner submit their own Annex 2.2? Thanks very much!	14/04/2020 In case of a joint tender, one single Annex 2.2 including all the information and details of all partners, meeting the capacity criteria can be submitted.

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6	09/04/2020 16:00	14/04/2020 17:08	Work package 1 – ToR page 7 – para 1.6 General Guidance on methodology	Can you please clarify whether the consultation tool of the Enterprise Europe Network to be used for the collection of data includes functionality for developing and distributing electronic questionnaires; Will the contractor use this tool to implement the questionnaire for the survey, or implement the questionnaire externally and use the consultation tool only for distribution of links to the questionnaire by e-mail;	14/04/2020 The consultation tool of the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) includes the development of the questionnaire with 'EU Survey' and its distribution among all EEN partners through the EEN intranet. The results of the questionnaire are eventually collected in a unique document by 'EU Survey' (outcome available in excel or pdf format). The contractor can choose to either use the consultation tool for both the development of the survey and for its distribution, or to develop the survey externally and distribute it through the consultation tool.

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7	15/04/2020 14:05	15/04/2020 14:09	Subcontracting	<p>In the ToR, on page 15 the Contracting Authority states that "Tenderers are required to identify all subcontractors whose share of the contract is above 30% or whose capacity is necessary to fulfil the selection criteria." On the same page, in the chapter 3.5., point 1 is noted that "Use of workers posted to the contractor by another company owned by the same group and established in a Member State" shall not be considered subcontracting. Could you please clarify the situation if we have a person and reference from our sister company (the same group and established in the Member State) to fulfil the technical and professional capacity criteria but the company will definitely share less than 30% of the contract can we identify the company as a subcontractor or according to the point 1 the company should be just considered as an entity that capacities we rely on? Thank you for your response.</p>	<p>15/04/2020 In order to reply to your question, one should consider separately technical and professional capacity. Regarding professional capacity (B. Criteria related to the team delivering the services): as you said "the use of workers posted to the contractor by another company owned by the same group and established in a Member State is not to be considered subcontracting, unless disposed differently by the economic operators." (section 3.5) Regarding technical capacity (A. Criteria relating to tenderers): section 4.3.4. requires that criteria are satisfied by the tenderers (i.e. combined capacity of all members of the group and identified subcontractors). In this regard, tenderers are also required to identify all subcontractors whose capacity is necessary to fulfil the selection criteria. You can also refer to section 4.3 where it is indicated that the economic operator placing technical and professional resources at disposal may be requested to assume the role of subcontractor for the performance of the contract. Your sister company can therefore place at your disposal resources (in terms of staff) without being considered a subcontractor; but if it contributes to the technical capacity it shall be</p>

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					the technical capacity it shall be considered a subcontractor.
8	18/04/2020 15:34	22/04/2020 16:20	Power of Attorney - Submission Date	On Annex 4 - Power of Attorney, we are asked to insert the date of submission of the tender. We do not yet know on which date we will submit. If we end up submitting on a date different to the one named on Annex 4, does that make Annex 4 void? Thanks for clarifying!	22/04/2020 In that case, you can write in the Power of Attorney document under "[insert date]": "by", and then the date of the deadline for tendering. You may then submit effectively the tender at any moment before the deadline for tendering date and hour (which is highly advisable not to be rejected for late delivery). We take the opportunity to remind tenderers not to wait for the last day/moment to submit their tenders.

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#	Submission date	Publication date	Question subject	Question	Answer
9	15/04/2020 16:03	22/04/2020 17:52	work package 1 – TOR page 7, section 1.6 use of the SME panel consultation tool	We would have some more questions concerning the use of the SME panel consultation tool of the Enterprise Europe Network: How many SMEs are included in the panel? Is there a minimum of 10.000 addresses of SMEs in the target countries guaranteed? What is the average response rate of SMEs in the panel (if there are experiences of previous surveys)? Is the minimum of 1.000 SMEs covering all target countries likely to be achieved over the SME panel consultation tool? Does the panel consultation tool / the Enterprise Europe Network provide a translation of the questionnaire for SMEs into the different EU languages or would the contractor have to provide these translations?	22/04/2020 Please find the answers to each of your questions: 1. The SME panel consultations do not have a fixed number of SMEs, as the target group varies depending on the topic of the consultation. Horizontal consultations received in the past up to 4000 responses, while very sector specific and technical consultations might get a couple of hundred responses only. SME panels are run with the help of the EEN partners who disseminate consultation questionnaires to their SME clients. Please note that SME panel consultations are run anonymously. Network partners do not disclose the addresses of their clients to the Commission. 2. There is no guarantee for a minimum of SMEs to be contacted. This depends on the topic and the client base of Network partners. 3. Response rate is very diverse, and depends on the length and complexity of questionnaires. Short and not too technical questionnaires had a better response rate in the past. 4. The SME panel can provide a good basis, but extra consultation will be necessary in countries with low response rates. (Please note the SME panels cannot provide a statistically representative result.) 5. For SME panel questionnaires the Commission can

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					questionnaires the Commission can provide the translation into official EU languages.
10	20/04/2020 14:38	22/04/2020 18:03	Enterprise Europe Network data base	Could you please indicate how many SME support organisations per country are available in the data base of the EEN ? What is the information available for each SME support organisation: contact name? email address? Telephone number?	22/04/2020 Question9
11	20/04/2020 14:36	24/04/2020 16:47	Enterprise Europe Network data base	Could you please indicate how many SMEs per country, with breakdowns in terms of size and sectors, are in the data base of Enterprise Europe Network? What is the information available for each SME: contact name? email address? Telephone number?	24/04/2020 Question9

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#	Submission date	Publication date	Question subject	Question	Answer
12	21/04/2020 12:17	24/04/2020 17:11	Regarding specific conditions for a natural person / the evidence of the economic and financial capacity criteria	Could you please clarify if there are any specific conditions for a natural person that we subcontract or involve as a partner or do the same requirements as for legal persons apply? Does subcontractor have to submit the evidence of the economic and financial capacity criteria (statement of turnover, copy of the profit and loss accounts) if his capacity is needed only to fulfill technical criteria?	<p>24/04/2020 Point 4.2 VERIFICATION OF NON-EXCLUSION of the Technical Specifications All tenderers (natural or legal persons) must provide a declaration on honour (Annex 3), signed and dated by an authorised representative, stating that they are not in one of the situations of exclusion listed in that declaration on honour. - In case of joint tender, each member of the group must provide a declaration on honour signed by an authorised representative. - In case of subcontracting, all subcontractors whose share of the contract is above 30% or whose capacity is necessary to fulfil the selection criteria must provide a declaration on honour signed by an authorised representative. With regard to the required economic and financial evidence, please refer to section III of the Annex 3, part of the Technical Specifications of the present tender.</p>

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#	Submission date	Publication date	Question subject	Question	Answer
13	21/04/2020 11:42	24/04/2020 17:27	Regarding technical criteria A4	<p>Dear Sir/Madam, I have a question with regard to technical criteria A4. Terms of Reference state that in addition to the references of at least two projects "the tenderer must prove that it has contacts in the rest of the EU countries that are not covered by its project experience but which form part of the geographical coverage of its offer, to ensure the required geographical coverage". I wonder if the references for projects that cover all EU countries is considered as a proof that we have contacts in all of the EU countries. I am also interested to know what else could qualify as evidence. Would it be enough to provide a list of our national contact points or should they be included in the project team as subcontractors? Also, I wonder if we need evidence that we have contacts in non-EU countries that are part of the geographical coverage of our offer. Currently, the criteria talks only about the EU countries, so we presume that the evidence for the coverage of non-EU countries is not necessary.</p>	<p>24/04/2020 Dear Madam/Sir, According to the technical specifications point 1.4.2. Geographical scope of the tasks, "The study must cover at least 15 EU Member States and at least 3 countries selected among the candidate/potential candidate countries participating in COSME programme. The country selection must be justified in the technical offer and must be geographically balanced." Evidence related to criterion A4 makes reference to the required geographical coverage, which include also at least 3 candidate/potential candidate countries participating in COSME programme. A list of your national contact points would suffice as evidence for A4 criterion.</p>

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14	26/04/2020 17:33	27/04/2020 17:13	Annex 6	In the e-Submission portal, we understand that we will submit Annex 6 under technical offer section. Is Annex 6 will be submitted as a different document or as part of the Technical tender document (for example first section of the Technical tender)?	27/04/2020 Yes, please submit the Annex 6 – Technical tender form under section Technical Tender in eSubmission.
15	26/04/2020 17:21	28/04/2020 15:04	Annex 8	Can you please confirm that evidence for selection criteria A1, A2, A4 and B4 will be provided only on request? Can you please confirm that we need to submit CVs for B1 and B3 profiles only? In addition, in annex 2.2 , under criterion A1, do you expect from us to include our internal CSR/sustainability policy in the second column (under "Criteria related to the tender") since we are not allowed to refer to other sections of the tender or to other documents or just confirm that we have such a policy in place?	28/04/2020 The ToR clearly specifies in point 4.3.4. Technical and professional capacity criteria and evidence, 2nd paragraph: "The evidence mentioned below must be provided only on request, except for evidences A3 (document in English), B1, B2 and B3 (CVs) that should be a part of the submitted offer." The evidence required for the criterion A1 is a copy of the tenderer's internal CSR/sustainability policy document. Since this document is to be provided upon request only, a reference detail, identification of the document can be mentioned in Annex 2.2.

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#	Submission date	Publication date	Question subject	Question	Answer
16	27/04/2020 15:05	04/05/2020 09:03	Translations by the Commission	Dear Madam/Sir In the answer to question 9, you have pointed out the option of translation of surveys in official EU languages being provided by the Commission in the case of distributing the survey through EEN. Can you please elaborate on the conditions where the translation is provided by the Commission? Does this apply to the questions of surveys as well the responses? Is the translation in these cases reimbursed by the contractor and if so what are the applicable fees?	04/05/2020 The translations of an SME panel questionnaire is provided by the Commission free of charge. The responses are normally collected and translated to English by EEN partners, and the end result is available in EUSurvey in English. (normally no extra translation is needed). The most important conditions for SME panels are that it has to be short (maximum 15 questions) and SME friendly. In addition the number of open questions should be limited (max 1-2 open questions)
17	21/04/2020 11:50	04/05/2020 17:47	CVs	Page 22 of the ToR requires detailed CVs to be up to 2 pages. Will CVs listing qualifications, past work experiences and languages in the first 2 pages and relevant project references in annexes be deemed acceptable?	04/05/2020 The detailed CV should include the relevant educational and professional qualifications and should be up to 2 (two) A4 pages for each of the team members and must specify: - The different diplomas obtained (copies of which may be requested by EASME where appropriate); - Languages spoken; - Expertise and experience relevant to the subject matter of the present invitation to tender.

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18	05/05/2020 12:11	06/05/2020 15:44	Availability of guidance documents	<p>Can you please clarify the status of the guidance documents the Commission has published; Paragraph 3 of Page 5 of the tender specs (section 1.2 Background information and context) note that there are two guidance documents for SMEs; 'My Business and Human Rights: A guide to business and human rights for SMEs' and 'CSR handbook for SMEs'. Only the former appears to be publicly available. Could you confirm whether the second is available, and provide it to tenderers if so?</p>	<p>06/05/2020 Both documents are publicly available at the following links: My Business and Human Rights: A guide to business and human rights for SMEs - https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwi5va7nwpzpAhVBsaQKHQVHAYYQFjACegQIARAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fec.europa.eu%2Fdocsroom%2Fdocuments%2F10375%2Fattachments%2F1%2Ftranslations%2Fen%2Frenditions%2Fpdf&usg=AOvVaw1VKbnJA_qYAZnxYvMyFWTI CSR handbook for SMEs - https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=2ahUKEwi8sKctw5zpAhXBGUwKHZftChwQFjABegQIARAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fec.europa.eu%2FDocsRoom%2Fdocuments%2F10368%2Fattachments%2F1%2Ftranslations%2Fen%2Frenditions%2Fnative&usg=AOvVaw2lXsd9pi3ylptKtb02Tqn_</p>

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19	06/05/2020 17:36	08/05/2020 16:11	Scope of WP 3 and WP 4	In the work packages 3 and 4, startups are not explicitly listed as being in the scope of the research, unlike for the work packages 1 and 2. Could you confirm whether the scope of WP 3 and WP 4 should also include support policies / delivery mechanisms for CSR and sustainability in startups?	08/05/2020 Yes. The scope of workpackages 3 and 4 should include support policies / delivery mechanisms for CSR and sustainability in start-ups. According to section 1.6 of the technical specifications, WP4: Policy recommendations output should be based on the results of the previous three workpackages.
20	06/05/2020 16:33	08/05/2020 16:28	WP1	Can you please clarify whether the minimum number of 1000 replies collected from SMEs stated in section 1.7 includes the replies received from both questionnaires described in WP1, i.e SMEs questionnaire and SMEs support organisations questionnaire. If not, do you have a minimum number of questionnaires that must be collected for the SMEs support organisations questionnaire? Does the the SME panel consultation tool of the Enterprise Europe Network includes SMEs support organisations?	08/05/2020 In accordance to point 1.7 of the technical specifications, one of the key performance indicators measured by the Contracting Authority is the number of replies collected from SMEs - minimum 1000 (covering all target countries). SME support organisations should be considered as stakeholders. Therefore, the results of the dedicated surveys are to be treated separately. The SME panel consultation tool of the Enterprise Europe Network does not include SMEs support organisations.

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21	06/05/2020 15:46	08/05/2020 16:38	Criteria relating to the team delivering the service	Can the same person covers the position of B1. Project Manager and the position of the expert B3.b as well? In addition can the same person covers both the positions of B3.a and B4?	08/05/2020 The minimum number of persons to fulfil the criteria B1 and B3 is one. There is no specific restriction for the same person to cover the aforementioned criteria. Criterion B4 refers to the team of data collection and it clearly imposes a minimum number of three (3) persons composing the team which should collectively fulfil the requirement. Therefore, the same person fulfilling criteria B3a and B4 would not be in line with the technical specifications requirements.

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