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EUROPEAN COMMISSION
EUROSTAT

Directorate E: Sectoral and Regional Statistics
Unit E4 Regional Statistics and Geographical Information

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Invitation to tender for the supply of statistical services

Stratification of the LUCAS 2018 Master

(ESTAT/E/2016/016 TENDER SPECIFIATIONS)

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SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Presentation of Eurostat

Eurostat is a Directorate-General of the European Commission ("Commission"). Its mission is to provide the European Union with a high quality statistical information service.

Together with the national statistical offices, Eurostat is responsible for the European statistical system: see Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2009 on European statistics (OJ L 87/164, 31.3.2009). Eurostat implements standards, methods and classifications for the production of comparable, reliable and relevant data. Users of Eurostat's output include the Commission and other institutions of the European Union, national governments of the Member States, international organisations, businessmen, universities and a wide range of other users. Eurostat also supports non-member countries, including the candidate countries, in adapting their statistical systems.

More information can be found on the Eurostat's website: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat

Eurostat carries out some of its activities by awarding contracts for the provision of services relating to the various fields of the European statistical programme.

1.2 Subject of the contract

The objective of this open Call for Tenders (*"Stratification of the LUCAS 2018 Master"*) is to provide the Commission the strata for a selection of 714.474 points of the master grid of LUCAS 2018 (a 2x2 Km grid of points which comprises a total of 1.097.964 points over the 28 EU member states)

The work will cover the following aspects/tasks:

(1) acquisition of aerial/satellite imagery for a square of 500x500 m around each point (*a.k.a. imagette*) to be photo interpreted
(2) acquisition of ancillary information to support the photointerpretation work, where appropriate
(3) the photointerpretation and classification of each point into one of 10 strata and one parameter, according to the provided instructions
(4) quality control

1.3 Glossary

– CLC – Corine Land Cover

– DOM / TOM – Domaines outre-mer/Territoires d'outre-mer

– KML/KMZ – Keyhole Markup Language

– LUCAS – Land Use and Cover Area-frame Survey

– MS – Multi-spectral

– NUTS - Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics

– PAN – Panchromatic

– RMSE – Root mean square error

SECTION 2 TECHNICAL INFORMATION

2.1 General information and objectives

2.1.1 General information

Land is the base for most biological and human activities on the earth. Agriculture, forestry, industries, transport, housing and other services all use land as a natural and/or economic resource. Land is also an integral part of ecosystems and indispensable for biodiversity and the carbon cycle.

Two interlinked concepts on land can be defined:

- Land cover refers to the bio-physical coverage of land (e.g. crops, grass, broad-leaved forest or built-up areas)
- Land use indicates the socio-economic use of land (e.g. agriculture, forestry, recreation or residential use).

The European Commission uses land cover/use data and statistics for purposes like nature protection, forest and water management, urban and transport planning, agricultural policy, natural hazards prevention and mitigation, soil protection and mapping, monitoring climate change, biodiversity, etc. Land cover and use data also forms the base for spatial and territorial analysis which are increasingly crucial for policy planning in many respects.

In order to improve the quality of the land cover/use statistics Eurostat implements the LUCAS survey, which is an area-frame statistical survey on land use and cover.

The LUCAS survey (Land use and cover area frame statistical survey) was launched by Eurostat in 2000. The project has been extended in duration from 2004 to 2007 by Decision 2066/2003/EC of 10/11/2003. The coverage of the EU-N10 member states and the related financing is laid down by Decision 786/2004/EC of 21/04/2004. From January 2008 onwards, LUCAS has been part of Eurostat’s activities and budget. The LUCAS 2009 survey was implemented in 23 EU countries in 2009, the LUCAS 2012 survey took place in 27 member states during Spring-Autumn 2012. The latest LUCAS survey took place in 2015 in 28 member states, and covered a total of 340.143 points (a part of which was photointerpreted). More information on the LUCAS survey is available on the LUCAS website (http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lucas/overview).

2.1.2 Objectives

The update of the LUCAS point's stratification through photointerpretation plays a crucial role in the quality of its outcome, since the LUCAS sampling is based on two-phase sampling with stratification of the master sample of points.

i) First Phase (Base grid): The LUCAS base is obtained by using a 1 Km^2 grid (resulting from the INSPIRE recommendations) with a systematic spatial sampling design[1] which includes around 4.400.000 points in the entire European Union territory.

ii) First Phase (Master grid): The LUCAS master is a subset of the base, comprising around N=1.100.000 points (corresponding to a 2 Km^2 grid covering the EU-28 territory, also systematically selected). Each of these points is classified into *k* land cover categories (the strata) on the basis of photointerpretation of aerial photos or satellite images. In 2005 these points in the master were stratified into 7 aggregated strata. In the present update 10 strata and one parameter are foreseen (see Table 3).

iii) Second Phase (Sample): The final field sample is a sub-selection of the master. A sample of *n* points, out of *N*, is selected by strata and by NUTS2 and the *n* points are visited in order to determine the land cover and land use at a more detailed level. The final aim of this strategy is to estimate the coverage of the full list of categories included in the LUCAS land cover and land use classification over the whole study area. In this way, it is possible to combine the information resulting from the photointerpretation with the information collected during the ground inspection of a portion of the *N* points selected in the first phase.

The final statistical estimates are based on the weights derived both from the master and the field observations.

Because of the two stage sampling process, the quality and timeliness of the stratification is very important for the accuracy of the statistical estimates. <u>A revision of the existing LUCAS stratification, done using a recent image coverage of known positional accuracy, that covers also the countries presently missing in the master grid, is a requirement for the improvement of the quality of the sampling for the next LUCAS surveys.</u>

Objectives of this project are:

- Updating of the master grid classification;
- Increasing the coverage of the master grid to cover for all member states
- Guarantee that the result complies with European quality standards.

2.1.3 Demonstration of technical quality

For the present tender, it is expected that the tenderers demonstrate technical quality by making available a set of data for demonstration purposes, in a structure similar to the one requested in the tender specifications. The set of demonstration data will be used for the evaluation procedure and therefore should be delivered as annex to the tender in the USB stick.

The following elements are to be provided:
a) *Imagettes* and KML/KMZ ground overlay documents to demonstrate quality of the proposed imagery to be used in the project and adherence to guidelines. The tenderer will

1 The point selection is referred to as Systematic Spatial Sampling if the total area under study is divided into quadrants, the first point is randomly selected in a quadrant and the remaining N-1 points are placed in the same position within the corresponding quadrants.

deliver, with the proposal a maximum of 27 *imagettes* and 27 KML ground overlays for demonstration purposes (maximum one per country indicated in Table 1 – Points per country).
b) Metadata tables for the imagery which the tenderer proposes to use for each country according to provided table template. The tenderer will deliver, with the proposal, 27 metadata tables (one per country, see Table 1 – Points per country), following the structure described in document S1 - Stratification Guidelines[2], and any additional tables in case additional data sources have to be used for completeness or complementarity.
c) Data for the points for which the *imagettes* mentioned in a) were produced. The tenderer delivers, with the proposal, CSV files with data for the mock points used for the production of the demonstration *imagettes* following the structure described in task 6 below.

2.2 Volume of the contract

The total volume of the photointerpretation work for the entire contract period is **estimated** to a minimum of 600 man / days. To these a further **estimated** 600 man/days are expected to be needed to cover for training of the technical team, internal quality control and corrections in result of external quality control. Further tasks include the acquisition and processing of imagery and the setup of the technical infrastructure (see details below).

The **estimated** total value is EUR 600.000 for the entire duration of the contract (8 months).

2.2.1 Preparation

The project implies that the contractor acquires an updated set of imagery from which imagettes (an extract of 500x500m around each point) are collected for each of the 714.474 points to be photointerpreted. This involves contacting many different entities for the supply of the imagery. This task also implies a significant amount of image processing for material that can have different sources, formats and coordinate systems. This will limit the extent and increase the complexity of the process automation needed. Adequate storage and backup is to be foreseen. Due to the dependencies, duration of this task is limited in time. All costs are to be included in the proposal.

2.2.2 IT and communication infrastructure

Adequate IT and communication infrastructure is needed. This includes computers for the photo interpreters and supervisors/quality controllers, enough disk space for storage of data and imagery, adequate backup system, a GIS tool for processing points, imagery and other geographic information, website and FTP site.

2.2.3 Human resources

The project manager will be the contact point with the Commission. In the tender the contractor has to indicate the number of proposed photo interpreters and supervisors/quality controllers and whether they will be working full or part-time. The

[2] Document is availabe on http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lucas/data/lucas-grid

number of photo interpreters has to be sufficient to allow the timely processing of all the points covered by the contract. The number of supervisors/quality controllers shall be sufficient to guarantee the quality and timely delivery of the data.

The photointerpretation of maximum 714.474 points of the master grid will be the most human intensive task of the contract and an estimated minimum of 600 man days for photointerpretation should be expected. For this scenario, an average productivity above 1.200 points per day will be needed to comply with the deadlines, so selected photo interpreters must have previous experience in similar tasks. A reserve list of people ready to cover for unplanned absences has to be foreseen.

2.2.4 Photointerpretation

In total the contractor will have to photointerpret a maximum of 714.474 points according to the instructions provided in document S1-Guidelines for stratification. The points will be classified at least into one stratum and two additional parameters. It is allowed to use ancillary information and to use semi-automated image interpretation techniques as a support to the photointerpretation, but in such cases a visual check is still needed to confirm the correct assignment of the point to the class.

2.2.5 Data transmission

Data transmission will include making available the imagery and other supporting information over an FTP site and delivery of data and imagery in hard disk.

2.2.6 Number of points to be photointerpreted

Table 1 – Points per country indicates the maximum number of point to be photointerpreted per country

Table 1 – Points per country

Country	Number of points	Observations
AT	10.509	
BE	4.441	
BG	19.080	
CY	591	
CZ	13.643	
DE	59.906	
DK	6.658	
EE	8.541	
EL	19.170	
ES	71.150	Includes the Canary islands
FI	64.586	
FR	84.441	Excludes DOM/TOM
HR	10.611	
HU	17.716	
IE	12.302	
IT	43.364	
LT	11.122	

LU	351	
LV	9.964	
MT	0	
NL	6.562	
PL	52.653	
PT	12.823	Includes Azores and Madeira
RO	39.158	
SE	80.532	
SI	3.011	
SK	9.208	
UK	42.381	
TOTAL	**714.474**	

2.2.7 Quality control

Internal quality control of the work is required. The tenderer shall indicate in the tender which measures he proposes to implement in order to guarantee high quality of the deliverables. Further corrections to the points may be requested by Eurostat in sequence of external quality control.

2.3 Tasks and expected results

The objectives listed above will be achieved through the tasks described below. The deliverables will have to be formally accepted by Eurostat according to the criteria mentioned in 2.8.

2.3.1 Task 1: Setup of the IT and communication infrastructure

The aim of this task is to ensure adequate IT and communication infrastructure is available. This includes computers for the photo interpreters and supervisors/quality controllers, enough disk space for storage of data and imagery, adequate backup system, a GIS tool for processing points, imagery and other geographic information, a website and FTP site.

The expected deliverables for this task are:

DLV 1A – Detailed description of the IT and communications infrastructure setup at the contractors office.

Duration and deadline

The task has to be completed 1 month after signature of contract

2.3.2 Task 2: Acquisition of an updated set of imagery and other ancillary information

The aim of this task is to collect the set of imagery on which the photointerpretation will be performed and any ancillary information that will support the photointerpretation work.

For the imagery, the contractor will use a suitable dataset in what regards spatial, spectral, radiometric and temporal resolution and positional accuracy (see Table 2).

Table 2 – Guidelines for selection of imagery

Spatial resolution	<=1m (a value of up to 2,5m is accepted if no better source is found)
Spectral resolution	Not less than 8 bit.
Temporal resolution	Most recent image available (2012 or more recent); multiple images of the same year may be needed to better discriminate some classes.
Radiometric resolution	Multispectral (true color or false color combinations are accepted); Pancromatic is accepted if no better source is found.
Positional accuracy	Average RMSE <= 2,5m; (Average RMSE up to 5m is accepted if no better source is found)
Cloud cover	<5%; a value of up to 10% can be accepted if presence of clouds does not interfere with correct interpretation of the point feature.
Mosaicking	Mosaicking of images is allowed, but mismatches along seam lines must be <3 pixels. Digital number variation on similar area type should not exceed 10% in average (or 4% in between each of the 3 channels).
Compression	Preference shall be given to lossless formats (eg. TIFF) over visually lossless ones (eg. JPEG, MrSID).
General Image Quality	Absence of defects which prevent the visual interpretation of the image.

The contractor will have to investigate available sources of imagery in order to acquire them. These sources will include (but are not limited to) national ortophotos available via map service or physical copy. Presently most countries regularly update the ortho images on a 3 year rolling schedule and some EU 28 countries allow the free usage of the orthophotos for other public services and for the implementation of public tasks.

To be considered also is the need to have images of different dates or different sensors (namely of greater spatial, temporal or spectral resolution) to help separate classes (e.g. agriculture vs. grassland; forest vs. shrubland; wetland) and achieve a greater accuracy.

If it is not possible to find adequate aerial orthophotographic images for a certain point in a given country, the contractor will have the possibility to use the VHR_IMAGE_2015 - Optical VHR multispectral and panchromatic coverage over Europe[3], available through the Copernicus Space Component Data Access (CSCDA) which is adequate for the purposes of this project since it is recent and collected under relatively uniform conditions. This is a multispectral coverage with a spatial resolution of less than 1m (PAN) or 2-4 m (MS), which is at the limit for the desired positional precision of the final result. It is possible to obtain the level 3 products (orthorectified) with national projection (national coordinate reference systems) or with European projection

[3] Data availability can be checked at https://spacedata.copernicus.eu/web/cscda/dataset/-/asset_publisher/uDd0At6AeU7H/content/optical-vhr-multispectral-and-panchromatic-coverage-over-europe-vhr_image_2015-?p_p_auth=ZUsRmqVh&_101_INSTANCE_nI5RModiuGwm_redirect=%2Fweb%2Fcscda%2Fdata-offer%2Fcore-datasets

(ETRS89-LAEA, EPSG code 3035). Data availability for the phase 2 core datasets including VHR_IMAGE_2015 - Optical VHR multispectral and panchromatic coverage over Europe can be found at https://spacedata.copernicus.eu/documents/12833/14553/CORE_DWH2_Web_Status. Access to this dataset will be granted via Eurostat under a multiple user and usage sub-licence[4].

The contractor may also use other auxiliary information either in vector, raster or tabular form, provided the quality parameters of such data are known and documented. As for all other data, metadata should be presented.

A list of providers and conditions for access and use (licensing, costs) per country, for all the datasets that will be used during the process of photointerpretation is to be delivered prior to the iniciation of the photointerpretation task. The list has to be validated by Eurostat.

Suitable licensing is mandatory for every dataset used. A copy of the licenses shall be made available for Eurostat.

Metadata for the datasets used shall be provided in INSPIRE compliant manner[5].

In what regards conversion of data, namely due to different coordinate systems, the point coordinates (which will be given in ETRS89-LAEA) can be projected to the local national systems for the purpose of photointerpretation. Information on coordinate system parameters and conversion parameters is to be presented in the appropriate tables of the reports.

The expected deliverables for this task are:

DLV 2A – List of data providers, per country

DLV 2B – List of imagery to be used

DLV 2C – List of ancillary information to be used

DLV 2D – Copy of the licenses for imagery and ancillary information

DLV 2E – Metadata tables for all datasets (imagery and ancillary information)

DLV 2F – List of coordinate systems and conversion parameters

Duration and deadline

The task has to be completed 1 month after signature of contract

2.3.3 Task 3: Preparation of the image (and data) extracts

The aim of this task is to prepare the imagery that will support the photointerpretation. This refers to the production of a minimum of 714.474 geo referenced image extracts that

[4] Terms and conditions (may be subject to updates) can be seen at https://spacedata.copernicus.eu/documents/12833/14545/Terms+and+Conditions+-+License+Document.pdf

[5]See http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:326:0012:0030:EN:PDFSee http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:326:0012:0030:EN:PDF and http://inspire-geoportal.ec.europa.eu/editor/

are to be photointerpreted (a square with 500 m sides, centered on each point of the master grid) and are to be delivered to Eurostat in hard disk with the accompanying metadata. In case of use of satellite image (VHR_IMAGE_2015) image enhancement operations may be needed.

Accepted formats are TIFF(+TFW), GeoTIFF or JPG(+JGW). Other formats may be accepted on demand by the contractor but Eurostat will have to explicitly accept it. Before final delivery, the ready imagettes shall be stored in a location where Eurostat can access them via FTP (read permissions).

For each image a ground overlay KML file will be delivered to Eurostat in hard disk. The file will combine the imagette with the point circumference (1.5m radius around the point), the extended window of observation circumference (20m radius around the point) and if relevant, any ancillary vector information to be used in the photointerpretation process. For more information on KML ground overlay see https://developers.google.com/kml/documentation/kml_tut. Symbology of vector data will be limited to outline, in order to allow visualization of the orthophoto. Before final delivery, these files shall be stored in a location where Eurostat can access them via FTP (read permissions).

The expected deliverables for this task are:

DLV 3A – Imagettes (on FTP and hard disk)

DLV 3B – Ground overlay files (KML/KMZ) for each imagette (on FTP and hard disk)

Duration and deadline

The task has to be completed 3 months after signature of contract

2.3.4 Task 4: Selection of the technical team

The aim of this task is to select the project team.

The CVs of the members of the project team have to be transmitted to the Commission for acceptance (see below details on timing for the provision of the relevant CVs). Take note that in case of replacement of any member of the team, prior acceptance by the Commission is needed and relevant CVs and lists must be updated accordingly.

The Commission will approve, ask for further clarifications or reject a CV within 5 working days after reception. The contractor will provide clarifications within the next 3 working days. The Commission can accept the clarifications (CV is accepted) or reject them (CV is rejected) in the following 3 working days. In case of a rejection the contractor will propose a new CV in the next 3 working days.

Photo interpreters, supervisors/quality controllers will be selected taking into account previous experience performing similar tasks. Minimum requirement is previous participation in one similar project (photointerpretation of land cover) and doing similar tasks full time for the duration of at least one month. In addition to previous experience as photointerpreter or supervisors/quality controller in a similar project full time for the duration of at least one month, the responsible for training will be selected taking into account previous experience as a trainer for similar projects involving photointerpretation of land cover (minimum one project).

Previous experience has shown that it is a good practice to foresee a pool of photo interpreters in case of need of replacements. It is expected these will be trained along with the remaining photo interpreters.

The expected deliverables for this task are:

DLV 4A - Europass CV of Supervisors/Quality controllers*
DLV 4B - Europass CV of Photo interpreters*
DLV 4C - Report on selection procedure
DLV 4D - Summary list of the project team*
*updates needed in case of change of the team

Duration and deadline

The task has to be completed 3 months after signature of contract

2.3.5 Task 5: Training of the technical team

The aim of this task is to provide adequate training for all members of the project team. The training has to consist of presentations, demonstrations and practical exercises.

As it is expected that the photo interpreters and supervisors/quality controllers have previous experience, the tenderer can foresee a length of the training of up to 3 days, to familiarize them with the software, images and guidelines. The contractor will provide the trainers, the logistical organisation of the training, and will pay the participation cost (if any) of the trainees.

The training kit will include the training schedule and programme, presence list, evaluation sheets and the set of training materials (presentations, tests and manuals) in digital format. Eurostat provides document S1-Guidelines for stratification English. If needed, the document will be translated by the contractor.

Training has to include (but is not limited to) the following technical and practical parts:

- LUCAS documentation: instructions, classification, and any other relevant documents
- Photo interpretation using orthorectified imagery
- Usage of different sorts of imagery (namely in what respects radiometry)
- Usage of the LUCAS rules (“look to the north”, “extended window of observation”)
- Recognition of land cover
- Data flow
- Quality assurance aspects
- Performing data correction
- Practical exercises
- Communication management (communication with the supervisor, help desk, etc.)
- Health and security at work
- Evaluation of the course by participants

The training is recommended to be followed by one-week of closely supervised work.

The expected deliverables for this task are:

DLV 5A - Training kit for approval by Eurostat at latest 10 days before first date for the training
DLV 5B – Training report (including trainees' feedback evaluation sheets, need for additional sessions, etc.)
DLV 5C – Certificate of completion of training

Duration and deadline
This task has to be completed 3 months after signature of contract, prior to the beginning of the photointerpretation task

2.3.6 Task 6: Photointerpretation of a maximum of 714.474 points on the master grid

The aim of this task is to assign, by photointerpretation, a stratum (one out of 10 possible classes) and a parameter to each point of the master grid (2km x 2km) relevant for the project. The point distribution per country can be seen on Table 1. As an input, this task requires the imagery collected in Task 2. Photointerpretation will be done for every selected point of the master grid, resulting in a classification according to Table 3.

Table 3 – Strata for photointerpretation of the Master grid

Stratum	**Description**	**Correspondence to LUCAS Land Cover classification**[6]
1	Arable land	(B1X..B5X) Cereals, root crops, non-permanent industrial crops, dried pulses, vegetables and flowers, fodder crops
2	Permanent crops	(B7X..B8X) Fruit trees and fruit bushes, other permanent crops (vineyards, olive trees)
3	Grass	(EXX) Grassland, with or without sparse tree/shrub cover
4	Wooded areas	(CXX) Areas where at least 10% is covered by tree canopy
5	Shrubs	(DXX) Shrub land with or without sparse tree cover
6	Bare surface, low or rare vegetation	(FXX) Bare land: areas with no vegetation (rocks, sand, and lichens) or areas covered less than 10% by dominant species of vegetation.
7	Artificial, constructions and sealed areas	(AXX) Built-up and artificial non built-up areas
8	Inland water	(GXX, except G30) Surfaces covered by water or ice, either permanently or for most of the year
9	Transitional waters and coastal waters	Points that are not part of "land" nor "inland water" areas (includes G30)

[6] For more detailed data on LUCAS Classification, Technical Document C3 can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/205002/6786255/LUCAS2015-C3-Classification-20150227.pdf/969ca853-e325-48b3-9d59-7e86023b2b27

10	Impossible to PI	Points that cannot be photo interpreted (e.g. image not available, clouds…). Points in this class are considered an exception subject to acceptance from Eurostat.

Parameter	**Description**	
Wet	Wetland	(YES/NO/Not possible to detect) For wetland areas, in case they occur in the same location as any of the strata
Assoc	Associated areas	(YES/NO/Not possible to detect) Areas associated to roads, residential, industrial, or other artificial/urban uses.

In some cases, it will be possible to classify the point under two different strata.

The results will be presented in CSV files (see structure below)

Table 4 – Point table structure (PT_YYYYMMDD.CSV)

Field	**Description**	**Observation**
IDPOINT	Point numeric unique identifier	Provided by Eurostat
X_LAEA	Lambert Azimuthal Equal Area X coordinate	Provided by Eurostat
Y_LAEA	Lambert Azimuthal Equal Area Y coordinate	Provided by Eurostat
LAT	ETRS 89 Latitude	Provided by Eurostat
LON	ETRS 89 Longitude	Provided by Eurostat
COUNTRY	Country code	Provided by Eurostat
NUTS1	Nuts 2013 level 1	Provided by Eurostat
NUTS2	Nuts 2013 level 2	Provided by Eurostat
EWO	Extended window of observation used	Y/N
LTNE	Look to North/East	N/E/8
STRATA1	Main code of the stratum	1..10
STRATA2	Alternative code of stratum	1..10 | Null (possible combinations)
WET	Parameter for wetland	Yes | No | Not possible to detect
ASSOC	Parameter for areas associated to residential, industrial or services	Yes | No | Not possible to detect
INTRPRT	ID of the photo interpreter	
DATE_PI	YYYYMMDD HHMMSS of last photointerpretation	
QC	Point to be controlled	1/0
CMNT	Comments from the photo interpreter	Structured/Free

Table 5 – Quality check table structure (QC_YYYYMMDD.CSV)

IDPOINT	Point numeric unique identifier	
IDCNTRL	Controller unique identifier	
CONTRLR	ID of the controller	
QC	Point to be controlled	1/0
DATE_QC	YYYYMMDD HHMMSS of quality control	
ACCEPT	Acceptance after QC	
N_IQCR	Number of times rejected by Internal QC	
N_EQCR	Number of times rejected by External QC	
CMNTQC	Comments (reason for rejection / options for correction)	Structured/Free
CMNTPI	Comments from the photo interpreter (reason for not correcting)	Structured/Free

Table 6 – Point to Metadata link table structure (PM_YYYYMMDD.CSV)

IDPOINT	Point numeric unique identifier	
IDMAP	Data identifier	Link to metadata tables

The expected deliverables for this task are:

DLV 6A – Monthly updates of the CSV tables (expected first Monday of every month)
DLV 6B – Final CSV tables

Duration and deadline
This task has to be completed 6 months after signature of contract

2.3.7 Task 7: Internal quality control

The aim of this task is to guarantee that a high quality of the stratification is achieved. The tenderer is requested to state which quality standards he will use and indicate how these standards will be measured in the course of performing the contract. A workflow and detailed description of the proposed quality control cycle is to be presented in the tender. The tenderer shall also describe in the tender the mechanisms that will be enforced to guarantee harmonized results over the different regions and over time.

The progress reports will report on the management, monitoring and follow-up of the project.

The expected deliverables for this task are:

DLV 7A – Weekly progress report based on the template provided by Eurostat on document S1-Guidelines for Stratification (expected every Thursday starting the week following the kick-off meeting)

Duration and deadline
This task has to be completed 6 months after signature of contract

2.3.8 Task 8: Point correction in sequence of external quality control

The aim of this task is to guarantee that a high quality of the stratification has been achieved. A sample of the points will be submitted to external quality control where the quality of the photointerpretation will be assessed independently. Eurostat will specify the selection criteria for these points. Points considered not OK will be returned to the contractor for correction. If a point is rejected twice it will be signalled. Updates will be delivered to Eurostat periodically, using tables with the structure already described under Task 6.

The expected deliverables for this task are:

DLV 8A – Monthly updates of the CSV tables (expected third Monday of every month)

2.4 Meetings and missions

A kick-off meeting with the maximum duration of one day will be held in Luxembourg soon after the signature of the contract.

One progress meeting with the maximum duration one day will be held in Luxembourg on T0+3months.

One final meeting maximum duration one day will be held in Luxembourg on T0+7months.

The minutes of each of these meetings (drafted in English) will be prepared by the contractor and sent to Eurostat at the latest 3 days after the meeting for approval.

Travel expenses for such meetings should be included in the financial proposal of the tender.

2.5 Duration and timetable

The contract is expected to be signed in the third quarter of 2016.

Execution of the tasks is to start on the date of entry into force of the contract. The maximal overall duration of the work will be 8 months.

The overall indicative timetable is the following:

Table 7 – Indicative schedule

Task	**T0**	**M1**	**M2**	**M3**	**M4**	**M5**	**M6**	**M7**	**M8**
Task 1: Setup of the IT and communication infrastructure	X	X							
Task 2: Acquisition of an updated set of imagery and other ancillary information	X	X							
Task 3: Preparation of the image (and data) extracts	X	X	X	X					
Task 4: Selection of the technical team	X	X	X	X					
Task 5: Training of the technical team		X	X	X					
Task 6: Photointerpretation of a maximum of 714.474 points on the master grid		X	X	X	X	X	X		
Task 7: Internal quality control		X	X	X	X	X	X		
Task 8: Point correction in sequence of external quality control		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Reports					IR				FR
Meetings	M			M				M	

Legend:

- M – month of project lifetime
- X – task's lifetime
- For details on deliverables check section 2.3

A detailed timetable should be provided by the tenderer in the offer.

2.6 Minimum requirements

Offers deviating from the requirements or not covering all minimum requirements described below may be rejected on the basis of non-compliance with the tender specifications and will not be further evaluated.

In the proposal the tenderer is expected to

- Describe the project management methodology which will be applied to plan, monitor and control the execution of activities.

- Present a detailed timetable

- Present a detailed task workflow (in the form of work breakdown structure) with an emphasis on the procedures for quality checking

- Acknowledge that:

a) the analysis will cover data from 28 countries as indicated in Table 1 – Points per country

b) the maximum number of points to be photo interpreted is 714.474

c) CSV tables, *imagettes* and KML ground overlays will be delivered in hard disk to Eurostat and until final delivery is accepted will be available on FTP accessible to Eurostat (read permissions)

d) the maximal duration of the execution of the photointerpretation task will not exceed 6 months after signature of contract

- Describe the IT and communication infrastructure (number and characteristics of server and client computers for the photo interpreters and supervisors/quality controllers, disk space for storage of data and imagery, backup system, which GIS tools for processing points, imagery and other geographic information, FTP setup).

- Indicate the composition of the team, namely the number of photo interpreters and supervisors/quality controllers that are expected to be at work during each month and specify the assignment of the staff to the different tasks.

- Indicate the proposed time for the training of the team

- Acknowledge that the working language will be English and that minutes and reports will be drafted in English as well.

Furthermore, the offer shall comply with applicable environmental, social and labour legislation established under Union legislation, national legislation, collective agreements or the applicable international social and environmental conventions listed in Annex X to Directive 2014/24/EU[7].

2.7 Reports

The work carried out by the contractor under the contract will be the subject of the following reports, which must be sent to Eurostat by the contractor both in hard copy and electronic format.

- Three months after the starting date of the execution of the tasks referred to in Article 1.3.1 of the contract, the contractor shall provide, after completion and in view of the

[7] OJ L 94 of 28.03.2014, p. 65

progress of the tasks referred to in 2.3 of this tender specification and as soon as possible after this date, an interim technical report relating to the execution of the contract describing the results obtained and the means which were implemented for the execution of the contract.

- Eight months after the starting date of the execution of the tasks referred to in Article 1.3.1 of the contract, the contractor shall provide, as soon as possible and within sixty days of completion of the tasks referred to in 2.3 of this tender specification, a final technical report relating to the execution of the contract describing the results obtained and the means which were implemented for the execution of the contract.

These reports, which will be drafted in English, shall accompany the corresponding invoice.

2.8 Assessment of results

Evaluation of the results will be based on the following criteria:

- Adherence to deadlines (execution of tasks according to time table);
- Quality of the deliverables (reports, *imagettes* and results of photo interpretation);
- Quality of the staff and the adherence to the profile requirements (progress reports have to provide information on the staff carrying out the work);
- Speed and agility of responding to requests;
- Quality of the contractor's staff follow-up and service/contract management.

2.9 Specific conditions

- Resources made available by Eurostat

Together with the tender, Eurostat will provide a list of the points that will be subject to photointerpretation on a .csv file including information for the following variables: IDPOINT, X_LAEA, Y_LAEA, LAT, LON, COUNTRY, NUTS1, NUTS2. The file will be available on http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lucas/data/lucas-grid

The document S1-Guidelines for stratification will be also available on http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lucas/data/lucas-grid

If necessary for acquiring access to imagery, Eurostat is prepared to provide the contractor with a letter certifying that the work is carried out on behalf of Eurostat.

In case access to the VHR_IMAGE_2015 - Optical VHR multispectral and panchromatic coverage over Europe is needed, it will be granted via Eurostat's multiple user and usage sub-licence.

- Specific conditions for the execution of the contract

Due to the short time-frame available to carry out the work, it is essential that the bidder setup demonstrates efficient management and adequate follow-up procedures. These procedures will have to include on-going quality controls of the photo-interpretation. The quality of photo-interpretation is extremely important for the LUCAS project and will determine to a large extent the precision of the final LUCAS results.

SECTION 3 INFORMATION ON THE CONTRACT

3.1 General information

The submission of the tender implies acceptance of all the terms and conditions set out in the procurement documents (contract notice, invitation to tender, tender specifications, draft contract) and, where appropriate, waiver of the tenderer's own general or specific terms and conditions. **The submitted tender is binding on the tenderer to whom the contract is awarded for the duration of the contract**.

Once the Commission has opened the tender, the document shall become the property of the Commission and it shall be treated confidentially.

The Contractor is to carry out the tasks in accordance with:

1. the contract;
2. the technical specifications;
3. the tender.

In the event of conflict between these three documents, their provisions will apply in descending order.

No variants are allowed in relation to the services or the price schedule proposed in accordance with this tender specification

The place of the work will be the Contractor's usual workplace, unless stated otherwise in section 2.9

3.2 Payments

Contracts will be expressed in euro. All payments under these contracts will also be made in euro.

Payments under the contract will be made in accordance with Articles I.5 and II.21 of the draft contract in Annex 9.

3.3 Replacement of persons assigned to carry out the work

The Commission expects the contract to be executed by those persons identified in the tender. Whenever a replacement is necessary, the Contractor must ensure a high degree of stability of the services and an effective transfer of information.

Any replacement must be submitted to the Commission for written approval. The Contractor shall provide a timely replacement with at least equivalent qualifications and experience if:

– for duly justified reasons, a person is unable to continue providing the services;

– any person specified in the contract is found by the Commission to be incompetent in discharging or unsuitable for the performance of his/her duties under the contract or if carrying out his tasks under the contract prejudices the good and timely performance of the contract. Unless otherwise stated, if the Commission requests a replacement in writing, the Contractor must propose a replacement within one month of the receipt of the Commission's request. Failure to make such a proposal within this period will be considered a breach of contract.

Such a replacement will not oblige the Commission to pay any remuneration, fees or costs additional to those laid down in the initial contract. The Contractor must bear any additional costs arising from or incidental to such replacement. Such costs will include the costs of the return journey of the replaced member of staff and his family, the costs of the replacement's training and, if necessary, the expenses arising from the need to maintain simultaneously at the place of work the member of staff to be replaced and his replacement.

3.4 Personal data and intellectual property rights

3.4.1 Personal data

If processing your reply to the invitation to tender involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as your name, address and CV), such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data. Unless indicated otherwise, your replies to the questions and any personal data requested are required to evaluate your tender in accordance with the specifications of the invitation to tender and will be processed solely for that purpose by the unit involved. Details concerning the processing of your personal data are available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/dataprotectionofficer/privacystatement_publicprocurement_en.pdf

All personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) if you are in one of the situations mentioned in Article 106 of the Financial Regulation[8]. For more information, see the Privacy Statement on

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm#BDCE

3.4.2 Intellectual property rights

Your attention is drawn on Article I.10 of the contract's special conditions which contains specific provisions on intellectual property rights related to the results of the contract and their use.

3.5 E-prior

The execution of the contract between the Commission and the contractors could be automated by the use of the following application: e-Invoicing, e-Catalogue, e-Ordering, e-Request based on an electronic exchange platform (e-Prior). Information on the technical and functional characteristics of the above-mentioned system can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/informatics/supplier_portal/documentation/documentation_en.htm

At the request of the Commission, the use of the above applications could be mandatory for contractors during the lifetime of the contract.

The e-Invoicing application may be used for this contract (the decision to use this application can be taken at the start of the contract or during the lifetime of the contract

[8] Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 (OJ L 298 of 26.10.2012, p. 1) as amended 28 october 2015

(through an amendment)). Further information on this application is available in the general conditions of the draft contract (Annex 9) in Art II.1 and II.5 and through the link above-mentioned.

If provided for in the special conditions of the contract, the exchange of electronic documents (e-documents) such as invoices between the parties is automated through the use of the *e-PRIOR* platform. This platform provides two possibilities for such exchanges: either through web services (machine-to-machine connection) or through a web application (the *supplier portal*).

Other applications as e-Sourcing and e-Fulfilment, which are currently under development may be implemented on a voluntary basis during the contract execution.

SECTION 4 INFORMATION ON THE TENDER PROCEDURE

4.1 General information

The legal basis for EU procurement consists of the relevant articles of the Financial Regulation and its Rules of Application ("RAP"), i.e.:

– Financial Regulation –Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union1, Part One, Title V (Procurement) (Articles 101 to 120), as amended by Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2015/1929 of the European Parliament and the Council of 28 October 2015.

– Rules of Application – Commission Delegated Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1268/2012 of 29 October 20122, Part One, Title V (Procurement) (Articles 121 to 172), amended by Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) C(2015)7555 of 30 October 2015.

– Judgments, mainly of the General Court in procurement cases.

The Financial Regulation and the Rules of Application incorporate the rules from Directive 2014/24/EU[9], hereinafter referred to as "the Directive" and Directive 2014/23/EU on concessions[10].

This invitation to tender is intended to be competitive. Any attempt by a tenderer to obtain confidential information, enter into unlawful agreements, collude or make arrangements with competitors, canvass or solicit Commission staff or influence the evaluation committee or its individual members in any way during the tendering process will render his or her tender invalid.

The tender must be clear and concise, with continuous page numbering, and assembled so as to constitute a coherent whole (e.g. bound or stapled, etc.). Since tenderers will be judged on the content of their written offers, these must clearly state that the tenderer is able to meet the requirements of the specifications and is capable of carrying out the work.

Tenders must be written in one of the official languages of the European Union. They must include all the information and documents required by the Commission for the evaluation of tenders on the basis of the exclusion, selection and award criteria, in accordance with these specifications, in the absence of which the Commission may decide to exclude the tender from the award procedure for the contract. For details, see item 4.4 "Structure of the tender".

4.2 Who may participate in this invitation to tender

Participation in this invitation to tender (including each member of a group of economic operators if applicable) is open on equal terms to all natural and legal persons coming within the scope of the Treaties, as well as to international organisations.

It is also open to all natural and legal persons established in a third country which:

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[9] OJ L 94, 28.03.2014, p. 65, see http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014L0024&from=EN

[10] OJ L 94, 28.03.2014, p. 1, see http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014L0023&from=EN

- has a special agreement with the European Union in the field of public procurement on the conditions laid down in that agreement or,

- has ratified the plurilateral Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA) concluded within the World Trade Organisation (WTO), under the terms of that Agreement.

A service provider may consider submitting a tender as a single entity or decide to collaborate with other service providers to present an offer: either by submitting a joint tender (via a group of economic operators) or through subcontracting. These two approaches may be combined.

In all cases the tender must clearly specify whether the providers involved in the tender are acting as members of the group of economic operators (joint tender) or as subcontractors (this also applies where the companies involved belong to the same group or where one of these companies is the parent company of the others).

A joint tender is a situation where an offer is submitted by a group of economic operators (natural or legal persons). Joint tender may include subcontractors in addition to the members of the group.

In case of joint tender, all members of the group assume joint and several liabilities towards the Contracting Authority for the performance of the contract as a whole, i.e. both financial and operational liability.

Group members in joint tenders may submit only one tender for a single contract. The tender must indicate which member ("the leader") will represent the group of economic operators in dealing with the Contracting Authority. The tender must describe the form the cooperation is to take in order to achieve the desired results and how technical, administrative and financial aspects will be organised.

If the tender does not mention that all members are jointly and severally liable, all other parties included in the tender than the party signing the tender (tenderer) will be considered subcontractors.

After the award, the Contracting Authority will sign the contract either with all members of the group, or with the leader on behalf of all members of the group, authorised by the other members via powers of attorney.

Subcontracting is the situation where a contract has been or is to be concluded between the Commission and a contractor and where the contractor, in order to carry out the contract, enters into legal commitments with other legal or natural persons for performing part of the service (in particular, any work performed by an expert who is not an employee of the tenderer will be considered as subcontracted). The Commission has no direct legal relationship with the subcontractor(s).

If certain tasks provided for in the contract are entrusted to subcontractors, the Contractor shall remain bound by its contractual obligations to the Commission under the Contract and shall be solely responsible for the performance of the contract (see Article II. 10 of the draft contract in Annex 9).

During contract performance, the change of any subcontractor identified in the tender or additional subcontracting will be subject to prior written approval of the Contracting Authority.

Tenderers are required to identify all subcontractors.

See Section 4, item 4.4 which information must be provided in case of group of economic operators and subcontracting.

4.3 How to send a tender

4.3.1 General Information

If you are interested in this contract, you should submit one original and four copies of your tender (see structure below) on paper (for each lot concerned, if several lots are proposed).

In addition you must submit one (1) electronic version on USB key. In case of discrepancy between the paper version and the electronic file, the paper version will take precedence.

You must indicate on the parcel the title of the call for tender, the reference number, the lot number (if any) and the name of the tenderer. It should also bear the words "Invitation to tender – not to be opened by the mail service". If a self-adhesive envelope is used as parcel, it must be sealed with adhesive tape and the sender must sign across this tape.

The tender must meet the deadline mentioned in the contract notice and be submitted:

- either **by registered mail or by courier service**, postmarked or registered by the courier service not later than **05/08/2016**, to the following address:

European Commission
For the attention of
Eurostat - Unit A.5 - (CAD) BECH F2/907
Jean Monnet Building
Rue Alcide de Gasperi
L-2920 Luxembourg (Kirchberg)

The outer envelope should bear, in addition to this address, the project title and the reference number of the invitation to tender.

- or **by hand delivery**, i.e. by delivery in person or by an authorised representative, not later than **4:30 p.m.** on **05/08/2016** to the following address:

European Commission
For the attention of
Eurostat - Unit A.5 – (CAD) BECH F2/907
Jean Monnet Building
Rue Alcide de Gasperi
L-2920 Luxembourg (Kirchberg)

where a signed and dated receipt must be obtained from an official in the Commission's central mail department who takes delivery. This department is open from 08:30 a.m. to 04:30 p.m. Monday to Friday. It is closed on Saturday, Sunday and Commission holidays.

If the offer is delivered by hand in person, it must actually reach the address indicated above no later than the hour and day indicated. See the summary table below:

	Final date	**Proof concerning**	
		submission of tender	**compliance with deadline**
Registered letter deposited in the post office network	The tender must be **posted** on the final date at the latest (regardless of the time)	Receipt issued by the post office	Postmark

	Final date	Proof concerning	
		submission of tender	**compliance with deadline**
Mail deposited with a messenger service	The tender must be **deposited** with the messenger service on the indicated date at the latest (regardless of the time)	Receipt issued by the messenger service	Date of the receipt
Delivery by hand, by the tenderer or by an authorised representative	The tender must arrive at the above-mentioned office address no later than the specified time on the final date.	Receipt signed by an official of the above-mentioned Commission service, indicating the date and time of receipt. This receipt will be issued on the spot to the tenderer or authorised representative.	Date of the receipt

All costs incurred for the preparation and submission of tenders are to be borne by the tenderers and will not be reimbursed.

4.3.2 Date and place of opening of the tenders

Tenders will be opened on 12/08/2016 at 9.30 a.m. at the following address:

Eurostat
Room B4/444
Joseph Bech Building
rue Alphonse Weicker, 5
L-2721 Luxembourg (Kirchberg)

One authorised representative of each tenderer may be present at this opening session. A written authorisation signed by the tenderer or his duly authorised agent must be presented to the opening committee.

4.3.3 Contact with Eurostat

In principle, no contact is permitted between the Commission and the tenderer during the procedure. However, contact may exceptionally be permitted before the final date for the receipt of offers:

- On the tenderers' initiative: in order (and only then) to clarify the nature of the contract. Such requests for additional information should be in writing only and indicate the section(s) and paragraph(s) to which they refer and shall be made through the "Question&answers" section in e-Tendering website (https://etendering.ted.europa.eu/cft/cft-display.html?cftId=1537).

The Contracting Authority is not bound to reply to requests for additional information made less than six working days before the deadline for receipt of tenders. Provided it has been requested in good time, such additional information will be supplied simultaneously to all economic operators through the e-Tendering website (https://etendering.ted.europa.eu/cft/cft-display.html?cftId=1537) no later than six days before the deadline for the receipt of tenders.

The website will be updated regularly and it is your responsibility to check for updates and modifications during the submission period.

- **On the initiative of the Contracting Authority**: in order to inform all interested parties of the existence of an error, a lack of precision, an omission or any other type of defect in the documents relating to the invitation to tender by supplying information on the e-Tendering website address:

https://etendering.ted.europa.eu/cft/cft-display.html?cftId=1537.

After the tenders have been opened, contact may be permitted only on the initiative of the Contracting Authority, where some clarification is required in connection with a tender, or if obvious clerical errors in the tender must be corrected, provided this does not lead to substantial changes to the terms of the submitted tender.

In any event, such contact must not lead to any amendment of the terms of the tender.

In exceptional case (unavailability of e-Tendering, other reason…), and under the conditions described above, further information can be obtained by sending an **e-mail or letter** to:

Financial Cell of Directorate E

Eurostat
Jean Monnet Building
Rue Alcide de Gasperi
L-2920 Luxembourg (Kirchberg)
Fax number: (+352) 4301-37316
E-mail: ESTAT-DIRECTORATE-E-CALL-FOR-TENDERS@ec.europa.eu

4.3.4 Period of validity of the tender

Tenders must be firm and not be subject to revision for the duration of the work. The tender must remain valid for a period as indicated under point IV.2.6 of the contract notice following the closing date for receipt of the tenders. Where the initial contract is stated to be renewable, the offer will remain valid for such renewals. Upon renewals of contracts, the Commission reserves the right to request updated forms for exclusion and selection criteria (see item 4.4 below). The contract(s) will be signed within the validity period, during which the tenderer must continue to meet all the requirements set in the exclusion, selection and award criteria. If the situation concerning these requirements has been altered in the period that has elapsed since the tender in question was submitted, any changes must be reported immediately and at the tenderer's own initiative to the Commission.

4.4 Structure of the tender

Tenders must be presented and structured in the same order of paragraphs as described below (five section) with page numbering. The tender must include all the requested information and be perfectly legible so that there can be no doubt as to words and figures:

Section One: Administrative information

Section Two: Exclusion criteria

Section Three: Selection criteria

Section Four: Technical offer

Section Five: Financial offer

The Commission reserves the right to request any other additional information in relation to the tender submitted, for evaluation or verification purposes within a time-limit mentioned in its request.

4.4.1 Section One: Administrative information

In the first section, the tenderer must provide:

- A cover letter signed by an authorised representative presenting the name of the tenderer (including all entities in case of joint tender) and identified subcontractors if applicable, and the name of the single contact point (leader) in relation to this procedure

- A table of contents (with page numbers)

- Administrative documents concerning its legal situation, i.e.:

Case 1: Submission by one tenderer

The completed "Administrative information form" (**Annex 1**) accompanied by a legible copy of the **notice of appointment of the persons authorised to represent the tenderer** in dealings with third parties and in legal proceedings, (if it is not included in the document requested in Annex 2), or a copy of the publication of such appointment if the legislation which applies to the legal entity concerned requires such publication. If they are necessary in order to show the authorisation to represent the tenderer, the instrument of incorporation or constitution of the legal entity and/or a copy of the statutes have to be submitted. If the person(s) signing the tender or the person designated to sign the contract is/are entitled to represent the economic operator by a power of attorney from the abovementioned authorised persons, the power of attorney must also be submitted;

The "Legal entity form" (**Annex 2**) completed and signed by an authorised representative of the tenderer accompanied by all the requested supporting evidences:

- For legal persons, a **proof of registration**, as prescribed in their country of establishment, on one of the professional or trade registers or any other official document showing the registration number, a copy of the **VAT registration document**, where applicable.
- For public entities: a **proof of registration** number in the national register of the entity, a copy of the **VAT registration document**, where applicable, a copy the **official legal act establishing the entity** (a law, a decree, etc.).
- For natural person: a legible photocopy of the identity documents, a **proof of registration**, as prescribed in their country of establishment, on one of the professional or trade registers or any other official document showing the registration number, a copy of the **VAT registration document**, where applicable.

A standard form for individuals, private entities and public entities in each Member State language is available at the following Internet address:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm

The "Financial identification form" (**Annex 3**) filled in and signed by an authorised representative of the tenderer and stamped by a bank representative. A specific form for each Member State language is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/financial_id_en.cfm

The questionnaire for joint offers and/or subcontracting signed by a legal representative of the tenderer (**Annex 4**).

Case 2: Submission in case of the tenderer with subcontractor(s)

If the tenderer wishes to subcontract all or part of the services, in addition to the documents to be provided in case 1, the following information must be provided in the tender:

The "Legal entity form" (**Annex 2**) completed and signed by the authorised representative of each subcontractor, accompanied by all the requested supporting evidence:

- For legal persons, a **proof of registration**, as prescribed in their country of establishment, on one of the professional or trade registers or any other official document showing the registration number, a copy of the **VAT registration document**, where applicable.
- For public entities: a **proof of registration** number in the national register of the entity, a copy of the **VAT registration document**, where applicable, a copy the **official legal act establishing the entity** (a law, a decree, etc.).
- For natural person: a legible photocopy of the identity documents, a **proof of registration**, as prescribed in their country of establishment, on one of the professional or trade registers or any other official document showing the registration number, a copy of the **VAT registration document**, where applicable.

A standard form for individuals, private entities and public entities in each Member State language is available at the following Internet address:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm

A letter of availability signed by an authorised representative of the subcontractor stating their willingness to provide the services presented in the tender and in line with the present tender specifications if the tenderer is awarded the contract (**Annex 5**).

Case 3: Submission of joint tender

Each entity involved (all members of the group of economic operators included the lead partner) must provide following documents:

The completed "Administrative information form" as provided in **Annex 1**;

The "Legal entity form" (**Annex 2**) completed and signed by an authorised representative of the tenderer, accompanied by all the requested supporting evidence:

- For legal persons, a **proof of registration**, as prescribed in their country of establishment, on one of the professional or trade registers or any other official document showing the registration number, a copy of the **VAT registration document**, where applicable.
- For public entities: a **proof of registration** number in the national register of the entity, a copy of the **VAT registration document**, where applicable, a copy the **official legal act establishing the entity** (a law, a decree, etc.).

- For natural person: a legible photocopy of the identity documents, a **proof of registration**, as prescribed in their country of establishment, on one of the professional or trade registers or any other official document showing the registration number, a copy of the **VAT registration document**, where applicable.

A standard form for individuals, private entities and public entities in each Member State language is available at the following Internet address:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm

A letter signed by each member of the group of economic operators, except the lead partner, giving the authorisation to the lead partner (**Annex 6: powers of attorney**) to submit the tender on its behalf.

In addition, the following documents must be provided by the lead partner:

The "Financial identification form" (**Annex 3**) filled in and signed by an authorised representative of the tenderer and stamped by the signed by a bank representative. A specific form for each Member State language is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/financial_id_en.cfm

The questionnaire for joint offers and/or subcontracting signed by a legal representative of the lead partner (**Annex 4**).

After the award of the contract, the following document must be provided by the lead partner only before the signature of the contract and on the request of the Commission:

"Power of attorney" filled in and signed by an authorised representative of each partner (Annex 6).

4.4.2 Section Two: Exclusion criteria

Article 106 of the Financial Regulation[11] defines situations when the tenderers shall be excluded from participating in procurement procedures.

Declaration:

The tenderer(s) including each partner in case of joint tender and each subcontractor[12] must provide the "Declaration on honour on exclusion criteria and selection criteria" (Annex 7) attesting that they are not in one of the exclusion situations detailed in the Declaration on honour.

Evidence:

Only on request of the Contracting Authority, and for contracts with a value higher than EUR 135.000, the successful tenderer must provide the documents mentioned as supporting evidence in the declaration on honour (Annex 7) before signature of the

[11] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L:2015:286:TOC

[12] The Contracting Authority shall require that a candidate or tenderer replaces a subcontractor or an entity on whose capacity the candidate or tenderer intends to rely, which is in an exclusion situation.

contract and within a deadline given by the Contracting Authority. This requirement applies to each member of the group in case of joint tender and to subcontractors whose capacity is necessary to fulfil the selection criteria. The Contracting Authority reserves the right to require these documents for the other subcontractors.

4.4.3 Section Three: Selection criteria

Tenderers must prove their legal, regulatory, economic, financial, technical and professional capacity to carry out the work subject to this procurement procedure.

The tenderer may rely on the capacities of other entities, regardless of the legal nature of the links which it has with them. It must in that case prove to the Contracting Authority that it will have at its disposal the resources necessary for performance of the contract, for example by producing an undertaking on the part of those entities to place those resources at its disposal.

The tender must include the proportion of the contract that the tenderer intends to subcontract (see Annex 4).

The tenderer (and each member of the group of economic operators in case of joint tender) must declare whether it is a Small or Medium Size Enterprise in accordance with Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC. This information is used for statistical purposes only.

Declaration:

The tenderers (and each member of the group of economic operators in case of joint tender) and subcontractors whose capacity is necessary to fulfil the selection criteria must provide the declaration on honour (see Annex 4), signed and dated by an authorised representative, stating that they fulfil the selection criteria applicable to them.

In case of joint tender or subcontracting, the criteria applicable to the tenderer as a whole will be verified by combining the various declarations for a consolidated assessment.

This declaration is part of the declaration used for exclusion criteria (see section 4.4.2) so only one declaration covering both aspects should be provided by each concerned entity.

Evidences:

All the tenderers have to be evaluated as regards selection (financial and technical) criteria.

Tenderers will be required to provide the evidence mentioned below (see 4.4.3 a, 4.4.3 b) in the offer. This requirement applies to each member of the group in case of joint tender and to subcontractors whose capacity is necessary to fulfil the selection criteria

a- Economic and financial capacity:

Tenderer(s), in case of joint tender each partner, must provide enclose the full set of annual accounts (balance sheet, profit and loss account and notes on the accounts) for the last two years.

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to ask these documents for the declared subcontractors.

If, for some exceptional reason which the Contracting Authority considers justified, a tenderer is unable to provide one or other of the above documents, it may prove its economic and financial capacity by any other document which the Contracting Authority considers appropriate. In any case, the Contracting Authority must at least be notified of the exceptional reason and its justification. The Commission reserves the right to request any other document enabling it to verify the tenderer's economic and financial capacity.

b- Technical and professional capacity:

The staff made permanently available for the contract period must have the necessary qualifications in terms of technical, linguistic and relational skills. The technical qualifications must include higher education and the linguistic and human relations knowledge enable them to work in an international environment.

As an evidence of the educational and professional qualifications tenderers must enclose a CV of all personnel to be involved directly in performing the contract (including those working for any subcontractors) indicating educational and professional qualifications and experiences in areas relevant to the subject of this tender.

In the CV the language competence must be mentioned, bearing in mind that the main working languages in the Commission are English, French and German.

The project manager assigned to this work must have a proven level and track record of knowledge and expertise with aerial survey techniques, with interpreting of imagery and quality control procedures.

Responsible for training will be selected taking into account previous experience as a trainer for similar projects involving photointerpretation of land cover (minimum one project).

The contractor has to propose an adequate number of photo interpreters and quality controllers and indicate in the tender how many will be recruited. Minimum requirement for photo interpreters and quality controllers is previous participation in one similar project and doing similar tasks full time for the duration of at least one month. The *curriculum vitae* of the photointerpreters and quality controllers will not have to be transmitted to Eurostat with the tender but is mandatory before the training.

Tenderers must indicate whether or not the proposed staffs are currently working for the tenderer on the date of submission of the offer. The tender will clearly indicate if the proposed expert is an employee or not of the tenderer. If the proposed expert is not an employee, he/she will be considered as a subcontractor. Any person who is engaged on another project, where the input from his/her position in that contract will not have ended before the expected start of his/her activities under this contract, and where this commitment restricts his/her intended role under this contract must not be proposed for this contract.

A letter of availability signed by an authorised representative of the subcontractor stating their willingness to provide the services presented in the tender and in line with the present tender specifications if the tenderer is awarded the contract (Annex 5).

In addition, the tenderer shall provide a list of the principal services provided in the past three years, with the amounts, dates and recipients (public or private) and any relevant evidence proving the requirements of the selection criteria (refer to section 4.5.1 b)).

4.4.4 Section Four: Technical offer

The technical offer is the core of the tender and it is essential that it conforms perfectly to all requirements listed in the technical specifications.

Tenders must be clear and concise. Since tenderers will be judged on the content of their written tenders, the tenders must clearly show how the tenderers are able to meet the requirements of the specifications.

If it is intended to subcontract part of the service, this should be indicated and quantified (the identity of and resources provided by the subcontractor).

The technical offer must cover all aspects and tasks required in the technical specifications and provide all the information needed to apply the award criteria.

Offers deviating from the requirements or not covering all minimum requirements described in section 2 point 2.6 (Technical specifications) may be rejected on the basis of non-compliance with the tender specifications and **will not be evaluated**.

The offer shall comply with applicable environmental, social and labour legislation established under Union legislation, national legislation, collective agreements or the applicable international social and environmental conventions listed in Annex X to Directive 2014/24/EU[13].

The Commission envisages applying the EMAS environmental management system (‘the EMAS system’) provided for by Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 of the European Parliament and the Council of 25 November 2009 on the voluntary participation by organisations in a Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS), repealing Regulation (EC) No 761/2001 and Commission Decisions 2001/681/EC and 2006/193/EC (OJ L 342 of 22.12.2009, p. 1).

During the execution of the contract, the successful tenderer, group member(s) and/or any subcontractor(s), if relevant, may be requested by the Contracting Authority to implement the EMAS scheme, inter alia by providing information relating to the contract field required for the drafting and updating of the documents provided for by Regulation No 1221/2009 and the periodic evaluation of the system.

4.4.5 Section Five: Financial offer

The compulsory reply form (Annex 8) must be used.

Prices must be expressed in euro.

Prices should be quoted free of all duties, taxes and other charges, i.e. also **free of VAT**, as the European Commission is exempt from such charges pursuant to the provisions of Articles 3 and 4 of the Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the European Union (of 8 April 1965).

All costs associated with the completion of the work, including overheads such as infrastructure, administration, costs and travel should be included in the overall fixed price in the financial proposal (no reimbursable variable costs).

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[13] OJ L 94 of 28.03.2014, p. 65

4.5 Evaluation and award

The evaluation is based solely on the information provided in the submitted tender. It involves the following:

- Verification of non-exclusion of tenderers on the basis of the exclusion criteria
- Selection of tenderers on the basis of selection criteria
- Verification of compliance with the minimum requirements set out in these tender specifications
- Evaluation of tenders on the basis of the award criteria

The tenders will be assessed in the order indicated above. Only tenders meeting the requirements of one step will pass on to the next step

The criteria for choosing the contractor are divided in three categories: exclusion, selection and award. Exclusion and selection criteria are related to the candidate or tenderer, whereas award criteria are related to the tender. Exclusion and selection criteria are verified on a pass/fail basis.

The Contracting Authority will inform candidates and tenderers, simultaneously and individually, by electronic means of decisions reached concerning the outcome of the procedure as soon as possible:

- After the opening phase for tenders received after the deadline or received already open;
- After the award decision, specifying in each case the grounds for the decision.

The information of the successful tenderer does not imply any commitment on the part of the Contracting Authority.

4.5.1 Exclusion and selection of tenderers

The assessment of tenderers will take place in 2 stages:

a- Exclusion of tenderers

Article 106 of the Financial Regulation[14] defines situations when the tenderers shall be excluded from participating in procurement procedures (see Annex 7).

As indicated in point 4.4.2, the tenderer(s) including each partner in case of joint tender and each subcontractor must provide the "Declaration on honour on exclusion criteria and selection criteria" (Annex 7) attesting that they are not in one of the exclusion situations detailed in the Declaration on honour.

[14] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L:2015:286:TOC

Only on request of the Contracting Authority, and for contracts with a value higher than EUR 135.000, the successful tenderer must provide the documents mentioned as supporting evidence in the declaration on honour (Annex 7) before signature of the contract and within a deadline given by the Contracting Authority. This requirement applies to each member of the group in case of joint tender and to subcontractors whose capacity is necessary to fulfil the selection criteria. The Contracting Authority reserves the right to require these documents for the other subcontractors.

The Contracting Authority may waive the obligation of a tenderer to submit the documentary evidence referred to annex 7 in the following cases:
(a) the candidate is an international organisation or;
(b) such evidence has already been submitted for the purposes of another procurement procedure in 2016 and provided that the documents are not more than one year old starting from their issuing date and that they are still valid. In such a case, the tenderer shall declare on his honour that the documentary evidence has already been provided in a previous procurement procedure and confirm that no changes in his situation have occurred.

b- Selection criteria

Tenderers must prove their legal, regulatory, economic, financial, technical and professional capacity to carry out the work subject to this procurement procedure.

Tenderers will be selected if they have the economic and financial capacity as well as the technical and professional capacity to perform the tasks required in this call for tender.

Legal and regulatory capacity

Tenderers must prove that they are allowed to pursue the professional activity necessary to carry out the work subject to this call for tenders. The tenderer (including each member of the group in case of joint tender) and sub-contractors must provide the requested information with the Legal Entity Form (See 4.4.1).

Economic and financial capacity criteria

The tenderer must have the necessary economic and financial capacity to perform this contract until its end. In order to prove their capacity, the tenderer must comply with the following selection criteria :

The **economic and financial capacity** of the tenderer will be assessed on the basis of the last annual turnover which has to be at least two times the annual value of the contract to be awarded (equal to the annual value of the financial offer submitted).

In the case of joint tender (group of economic operators) or subcontracting, this turnover criteria shall be assessed in relation to the combined turnover of all the parties involved in the tender.

Tenderers will be required to provide the evidence mentioned below (see 4.4.3 a) in the offer. This requirement applies to each member of the group in case of joint tender and to subcontractors whose capacity is necessary to fulfil the selection criteria

The Contracting Authority may waive the obligation of a tenderer to submit the documentary evidence referred in point 4.4.3 a) above, if such evidence has already been submitted for the purposes of another procurement procedure in 2016 and that they are still valid. In such a case, the tenderer shall declare on his honour that the documentary evidence has already been provided in a previous procurement procedure and confirm that no changes in his situation have occurred.

All the requirements have to be fulfilled at the deadline for the submission of the offer

- **Technical and professional capacity criteria**

The **technical and professional capacity** of tenderer(s) will be assessed from the qualifications of the staff/experts proposed, the principal services provided in the past three years and, if any, the specific requirements mentioned in the tender specifications. In the case of joint tender (group of economic operators) or subcontracting, the technical and professional capacity shall be assessed in relation to the combined capacity of all the parties involved in the tender.

The tenderer must meet the following criteria:

- criteria relating to the tenderer:

Criterion	Experience in the field of photointerpretation of land cover over aerial imagery
Minimum requirement	Experience in the field of photointerpretation of land cover over aerial imagery, with at least 1 similar project delivered in this field in the last three years.
Documentary evidence	Delivers a list of relevant projects in the proposal

Criterion	Geographical coverage
Minimum requirement	Experience of working in at least 2 EU countries with at least 2 similar projects delivered in the last three years, the combination of which must show the necessary geographic coverage.
Documentary evidence	Delivers a list of relevant projects in the proposal

- criteria relating to the team delivering the service:

Criterion	Educational and professional qualification of the project manager
Minimum requirement	A good balance between theoretical knowledge and practical experience should be sought. The project manager has to

	have a university degree (minimum B.Sc. or equivalent) in geography or environmental sciences or biology or agriculture or other related field and a minimum 2 years work experience in land cover/use related tasks, including quality control. Previous experience as project manager in at least one similar project is required.
Documentary evidence	CV of project manager

Criterion	Language capabilities of the project manager
Minimum requirement	Knowledge of English as a working language is required (B2 or above in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).
Documentary evidence	CV of project manager

Criterion	Educational and professional qualification of the responsible for the training
Minimum requirement	A good balance between theoretical knowledge and practical experience should be sought. The responsible for training will be selected taking into account previous experience as photo interpreter and/or supervisor/quality controller a trainer for similar projects involving photointerpretation of land cover (minimum one project).
Documentary evidence	CV of responsible for training

Criterion	Language capabilities of the project manager
Minimum requirement	Besides full command of the language to be used during the training sessions (C2 or mother tongue in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), knowledge of English as a working language is required (B2 or above in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).
Documentary evidence	CV of responsible for training

The CVs of photo interpreters and supervisors/quality controllers are assessed only after the signature of contract and not at the moment of the tender.

The assessment will be based on the documents submited with the tender.

Tenderers who wish to be taken into consideration must submit all the necessary supporting documents (as indicated in section 4.4.3b)) and must use the forms provided in the annexes to this document.

Tenderers will be required to provide the evidence mentioned below (see 4.4.3 b) in the offer. This requirement applies to each member of the group in case of joint tender and to subcontractors whose capacity is necessary to fulfil the selection criteria

Incomplete tenders may be rejected. However, the Commission may request the submission of missing formal documents by electronic mail (normally to be submitted within 24 hours after the request).

In addition, the Commission reserves the right to use any other information from public or specialist sources.

All the requirements have to be fulfilled at the deadline for the submission of the offer

4.5.2 Compliance with minimum requirements

Before proceeding to the evaluation of the award criteria, the evaluation committee will assess the compliance of the tender with the minimum requirements contained in section 2 point 2.6 of the present tender specifications.

Furthermore, the offer shall comply with applicable environmental, social and labour legislation established under Union legislation, national legislation, collective agreements or the applicable international social and environmental conventions listed in Annex X to Directive 2014/24/EU[15].

Offers deviating from the requirements defined in the tender specifications or not covering all requirements may be excluded on the basis of non-conformity with the tender specifications and will not be evaluated

4.5.3 Award of the contract

a- Evaluation of the technical quality of the offer

The evaluation (award) criteria will be assessed in relation to the tender as a whole.

The technical offer (including any subcontracted parts) must be sufficiently detailed to enable the offer to be assessed on the basis of all award criteria mentioned below. It should meet the technical specifications and address all matters laid down therein. The tender should provide all the information required to award the contract, including a description of the intended team structure and the respective role of each team member and (where applicable) models, examples and technical solutions to problems raised in the specifications.

For the present tender, it is expected that the tenderers demonstrate technical quality by making available a set of data for demonstration purposes, in a structure similar to the one requested in the tender specifications. The set of demonstration data will be used for the evaluation procedure and therefore should be delivered as annex to the tender in the USB stick.

The following elements are to be provided:
a) *Imagettes* and KML/KMZ ground overlay documents to demonstrate quality of the proposed imagery to be used in the project and adherence to guidelines. The tenderer will deliver, with the proposal a maximum of 27 *imagettes* and 27 KML ground overlays for demonstration purposes (maximum one per country indicated in Table 1 – Points per country).

[15] OJ L 94 of 28.03.2014, p. 65

b) Metadata tables for the imagery which the tenderer proposes to use for each country according to provided table template. The tenderer will deliver, with the proposal, 27 metadata tables (one per country, see Table 1 – Points per country), following the structure described in document S1 - Stratification Guidelines[16], and any additional tables in case additional data sources have to be used for completeness or complementarity.
c) Data for the points for which the *imagettes* mentioned in a) were produced. The tenderer delivers, with the proposal, CSV files with data for the mock points used for the production of the demonstration *imagettes* following the structure described in task 6 below.

Merely repeating the mandatory requirements set out in these specifications without going into detail or adding any value will result in a very low score. The degree to which the criteria are met will be measured by a points score for each criterion. The relative importance of criteria for the overall score is indicated by the weighting of the award criteria.

Before its dispatch, please check that your offer is well documented according to the award criteria.

The technical quality of the offer will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

1. Technical approach and methodology (35 points)

This criterion will help assess to which extent the practical implementation and methodology proposed for the project demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness and will be a key success factor for the project and its successful and timely completion.

The technical approach and methodology will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- The practical implementation proposed for the project demonstrates efficiency and effectiveness of approach and method taking into account any particularities that are mentioned in the specific project
- The tenderer presents a high level of detail on the description of the work and the clarity of practical application on how to achieve the project's goals and outputs, and gives examples to demonstrate that it will work.
- The tenderer describes the project management methodology which will be applied to plan, monitor and control the execution of activities.
- The set of demonstration data provided (see 2.1.3) corresponds to the requirements.

2. Work plan and timetable – overall planning (15 points)

This criterion will help assess the relevance and quality of the overall planning, of the proposed work plan and of the corresponding dedicated resource and how the project will meet the proposed deadline(s).

The work plan and timetable will be assessed according to the following criteria:

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[16] Document is availabe on http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lucas/data/lucas-grid

- The tenderer presents a detailed work plan and timetable, enough to demonstrate that the proposed method is feasible to produce the deliverables by the deadline
- The work plan makes specific reference to mobilization of the team, appropriate evaluation points, submission of reports and documents, specific meetings, etc.
- The tender shows agreement that implementation of the work program is feasible, including rapid start-up and reports submitted on time
- Work packages are clear and divided responsibilities and organization of work time amongst team members is presented
- The tenderer takes into consideration any possible delays and makes reference to possible ways to mitigate their effects

3. Management arrangements –Organization of the work and resources (30 points)

This criterion will help assess the organisation of work, covering both implementation of the contract and how the Contractor will provide support for the management and administration of the contract and contact(s) with Commission services.

The management arrangements - Organization of the work and resources will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- Regarding the organization of work, the tender covers both implementation of the contract and also how the contractor will provide support for the management and administration of the contract.
- The tender includes a description of how autonomously the tenderer is able to implement the project, an estimate of how much and what kind of Eurostat involvement would be needed to ensure successful delivery and how cooperation with the Commission will be managed in practice.
- The tenderer provides a detailed description of the proposed team (number / profiles) with their role and responsibilities and of the different economic operators (in case of joint tender, including subcontractor if applicable) distributed for each task and work package and the rationale behind the choice of the proposed allocation. Balance between profiles and breakdown of the tasks (which profile is going to do which task and how much time will be devoted to each task per profile) is also presented.
- Regarding staffing arrangements, the tenderer shows he can mobilize the appropriate resources (relevancy of the composition of team in term of volume and tasks allocation) for achieving the desired objectives.
- The tender describes the control the tenderer will exercise over those working on the project.
- The tenderer indicates the business continuity measures on how continuity will be assured if staff assigned to the project leave. The tenderer describes the back-up system to cover absences of key profiles (project manager, senior expert...)
- The tenderer provides detailed needs and justification for specific technical resources (software, informatics, resources, logistic, etc.).

4. Quality arrangements - Quality control measures (20 points)

This criterion will help assess the overall quality control system of the tenderer and how this will fit Eurostat requirements and help deliver the project in a quality and timely manner.

The quality arrangements - Quality control measures will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- The tenderer presents a well-structured approach to ensure that the service provided to Eurostat will be of acceptable quality regarding the timing, the resources and the governance.
- The tender details the quality control system applied to the service foreseen in the tender specification concerning the quality of the deliverables and continuity of the service in case of absence of any member of the team

b- Method of selecting the economically most advantageous tender

Only tenderers whose offer has scored 50 % for each criterion and minimum 50 points in total or more on the technical evaluation according to the criteria and points set out under item 4.5.3.a may participate in the evaluation of the financial proposal. The contract will be awarded to the economically most advantageous tender, i.e. the tender offering the best price-quality ratio on the basis of the following method:

$$R = \left(\frac{P\min}{P} * 100 \right) * 0.50 + Q * 0.50$$

where:

R	Price-quality ratio
Q	total quality score (out of 100) of tender in question
Pmin	Cheapest price
P	price of tender in question

The tender ranked first after applying the formula will be awarded the contract.

c- Notification of tenderers of decisions taken by the Contracting Authority

You will be informed of the outcome of this procurement procedure by **e-mail only**. It is your responsibility to provide a valid e-mail address together with your contact details in your tender and to check this e-mail address regularly.

Eurostat will notify the successful tenderer of the award decision. This notification does not constitute a commitment on the part of Eurostat.

Simultaneously and individually, the Contracting Authority will inform all unsuccessful tenderers, by electronic means, that their application or tender has not been accepted, specifying in each case the reasons why the tender or application has not been accepted.

Unsuccessful tenderers may request additional information about the reasons for their rejection in writing by mail or email, and all tenderers who have put in an admissible tender (i.e. one that meets the exclusion and selection criteria) may obtain information about the characteristics and relative merits of the tender accepted and the name of the successful tenderer.

However, certain details need not be disclosed where disclosure would hinder application of the law, would be contrary to the public interest or would harm the legitimate business interests of public or private undertakings or could distort fair competition between those undertakings.

The Contracting Authority must reply within fifteen calendar days from receipt of the request.

The Contracting Authority may not sign the contract with the successful tenderer until 10 calendar days ("standstill period"). That period shall run from the day after the simultaneous dispatch of the notifications to successful and unsuccessful tenderers. However, if due to technical reasons the dispatch is made on paper, the standstill period is 15 days.

If only one tender has been received, there will not be a standstill period for signing the contract.

If necessary, the Contracting Authority may suspend signing of the contract for additional examination if justified by the requests or comments made by unsuccessful tenderers during the standstill period or any other relevant information received during that period. In that event, all the tenderers must be informed within three working days following the suspension decision.

Should it not be possible to conclude the contract with the successful tenderer or should they withdraw, Eurostat reserves the right to review its decision and to award the contract to another tenderer, to close or to cancel the procedure.

Any request for information and any reply will have neither the purpose nor the effect of suspending the deadline for lodging an appeal against the contract award decision, which must be done within two months of the notification.

d- No obligation to award the contract

Opening to competition or the launch of an invitation to tender in no way imposes on the Commission an obligation to award the contract. The Commission will not be liable for any compensation for tenderers whose tenders have not been accepted, nor will it be so liable if it decides to abandon the procurement or cancel the award procedure. This decision would be substantiated and notified to the tenderers.