

**ANNEX I TO THE INVITATION TO TENDER**

**TENDER SPECIFICATIONS**

**Media Services - ON-LINE COMMUNICATION CONSULTANCY SERVICES**

**OPEN CALL FOR TENDERS**

PO-2016-16/DUB

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## **1. OBJECTIVE AND CONTEXT**

In accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of the European Union (EU), Directorate-General for Communication ("DG COMM") of the European Commission ("The Commission") has the specific task of informing the media and the citizens of the activities of the Commission and to communicate the objectives and goals of its policies and actions; while at the same time informing the Commission of the evolution of opinion in the Member States.

In order to accomplish its mission, DG COMM co-ordinates the activities of the Representations in the Member States, centralises all contacts with the media, and seeks to ensure a coherent approach to communication and information issues within the Commission. This involves contacts with Directorates-General and Services within the Commission that have Information Units responsible for sectoral information.

DG COMM conducts information and communication activities on EU policy decisions and their consequences as part of the Commission's information and communication strategy, which is intended to increase EU citizen's understanding of EU policies and issues.

For more information on the Commission's communication policy please see:

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/index_en.htm)

In addition to these centrally defined priorities, each Representation identifies national EU-related issues of particular interest.

These initiatives, which target the general public as a whole, need to be implemented taking the Irish situation and the perceptions of the Irish public into account.

Research carried out by the Representation has reinforced the need to step up communication efforts with sectors of the population who have been less engaged on European issues, notably young people, women and the less well-off. The research findings underline the need to find ways to engage at a local level, for instance to convey the benefits of the EU membership in local terms. There will therefore be a continued need for local research to guide and inform local communication efforts. The information and communication activities of the Representation are carried out within the framework of a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the European Commission Representation in Ireland, The European Parliament Information Office in Ireland and the Irish Government. The principles of the Representation's activities are: the need to listen, to engage in two way communication and to "go local" by adapting messages to particular circumstances.

## **2. SUBJECT OF THE CONTRACT**

In the framework of its communication policy, the Commission Representation in Ireland organises a range of activities for the general public to explain the EU, its policies and its Institutions.

### **2.1. Services required**

This tender seeks the assistance of suitably qualified service providers and/or services provided by individual experts in the implementation and evaluation of the European Commission's communication policies

The aim is to supply the European Commission with services enabling it to provide the general public, other specified target groups, and the media with information on Commission policy. The services requested by the Commission should enable it not just to improve the coordination of information and communication activities, but also to further develop its information and communication policy. Ultimately the aim is to make the activities, objectives and policies of the Commission better known to the general public via the media, especially social media and the internet.

The contractor will:

- carry out the necessary research and analysis work, in order to identify target groups
- carry out studies to identify internet potential among target groups
- define a list of issues which are of interest to these target groups and can be addressed via the Internet
- prepare a detailed plan of actions to be carried out, taking into account their available resources

The services required are as follows:

| Deliverable   | Description of the services requested   |
|---|---|
| <b>Drafting and updating of an Action Plan</b>            | <p><i>Assistance with designing and developing a detailed on-line action plan focussing on specific issue(s) identified by the European Commission</i></p> <p>The contractor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- carry out the necessary research and analysis work, in order to identify target groups</li> <li>- carry out studies to identify internet potential among target groups</li> <li>- define a list of issues which are of interest to these target groups and can be addressed via the Internet</li> <li>- prepare a detailed plan of actions to be carried out, taking into account the available resources</li> </ul> <p>The contractor should identify relevant communication tools (e.g. interactive web tools) and their most effective use. For this purpose, the contractor will take into account the Commission existing websites. The action plan needs to promote a modern image of the EU, to reflect openness and willingness of the EU to communicate with the public, to focus especially on EU activities with a local dimension and relevance for given target groups</p> |
| <b>2 Preparation of information material for internet</b> | <p><i>Assistance in the production of the information</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- write articles, interviews and other news items (to be uploaded on the Commission's websites after approval by the Commission's responsible officer)</li> <li>- draft specific website text for the Representation's website on important EU events such as European Councils, G7/G8 Summits, Intergovernmental Conferences, European elections, etc. or international developments at WTO, NATO etc. where there is a European dimension</li> <li>- find, create and implement illustrations and pictures for use on the Commission's websites, ensuring that there are no copyright restrictions (Please refer to Section 2.4 Intellectual Property Rights) ; propose the design and layout of the documents</li> <li>- draft and keep up to date the website pages and special information dossiers for specific target groups (e.g. youth, media) on issues of interest</li> </ul>   |
| <b>3 "Watchdog function"</b>                              | <p><b>"Watchdog function"</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- propose and post rebuttals and reactions to misleading interpretations, myths, etc. published on internet (blogs, discussion forums), after validation by the European Commission</li> </ul>   |

|   |                   |   |
|---|-------------------|---|
| 4 | Feedback          | <p><b>Analysis and drafting of a feedback-report on IT activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- assess the relevance of the on-line activity</li> <li>- report on the outcomes of the on-line activity: results, political messages, decisions...etc</li> <li>- where applicable, request the evaluation of the on-line activity from participants either directly or via online tools, after the event.</li> </ul> <p>The contractor will use for this purpose the tools (and in particular, survey mechanisms and reporting tools) which are provided by the Commission</p>  |
| 5 | Social Networking | <p>Advise on social media such as Facebook and Twitter and on discussion forums, provide information for the social media pages of the Representation in Ireland:</p> <p>Facebook, the Representation in Ireland: <a href="http://www.facebook.com/EUIreland">http://www.facebook.com/EUIreland</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- suggest changes in page appearance</li> <li>- promote the pages within Facebook and in other social media</li> <li>- seeding of discussions</li> <li>- advise the moderator</li> <li>- increase the number of friends added over the duration of the contract</li> </ul> <p>Twitter: <a href="https://twitter.com/euireland">https://twitter.com/euireland</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- suggest updates in page appearance</li> <li>- liaise with the Representation on tweets</li> <li>- suggest ways to increase the amount of followers and provide indication of tweets</li> </ul> |

## 2.2 Working arrangements

- The services will be performed on the contractor's own premises. The contractor must possess the necessary infrastructure and resources for the satisfactory execution of the work prescribed in the contract. The Contractor is also responsible for clearing the corresponding rights and obtaining the necessary authorisations.
- The contractor works under their own responsibility and does not represent the Representation, or the European Commission. The contractor's staff works under the instructions of the contractor.
- The contractor must ensure that the services described are supplied over forty-five weeks of the year, that is, excluding the month of August and Christmas and Easter holidays, and must detail in their tender how this will be achieved. The contractor will be solely responsible for the proper execution throughout the forty-five weeks referred to without interruption. Please refer to the list of Representation holidays for 2016 in Annex VI.
- In total it is estimated that the services indicated would represent a labour input of the order of 110 man/work days per year.

At least once each quarter, the contractor will attend a meeting in the Representation to review the progress and success of the service being provided and to preview important events and decisions which may be anticipated. From time to time, such meetings may also include the Representation's other service providers, responsible for the assessment and promotion of coverage of EU matters in Ireland by other media.

- In addition to the above, the contractor may be requested by the Representation to participate in meetings at the Commission headquarters in Brussels (as an indication, twice a year, duration: 1 to 2 days each). The Representation would request such participation 4

weeks in advance. This travel will be reimbursed separately in accordance with the provisions set out in Article 1.4.3 and Article II.22 of the draft Service Contract which accompanies these Tender Specifications (see Annex II to the invitation to tender).

- The costs of any travel considered necessary by the contractor or for the purposes of compilation of news material for fulfilment of the contract have to be included in the price offer and cannot be reimbursed separately.

## **2.3 Reports**

The Contractor must report quarterly, in English, on the services rendered in performance of the contract, as well as the results of the media impact achieved. The Contractor must provide one copy of the report by electronic mail and two paper copies not later than 60 days after the end of the period of provision of services. See Article I.5 "Payment Arrangements" of the Model Service Contract.

### **The Quarterly Progress Report should include:**

- the activities performed during the quarter;
- a detailed description of the results and analysis (both quantitative and qualitative) of the media impact achieved;
- proposals for improving..... (indicating topics, assignments, etc.).

### **The Final progress report should include, for the duration of the yearly contract:**

- all the data requested at quarterly progress report for the final quarter;
- a summary of the services performed during the whole duration of the yearly contract, in terms of quantity and price, broken down by type;
- a qualitative analysis, including recommendations for optimising and evaluating the impact of the actions undertaken.

All expenses incurred in drafting, producing and distributing the reports will be included in the unit prices of the financial offer and will not be paid separately.

## **2.4 Copyrights and Intellectual Property Rights**

Compliance with copyright law and other intellectual property legislation is of utmost importance to the Commission. In providing the services, the contractor must ensure compliance with applicable copyright provisions, other intellectual property legislation and the conditions in these tender specifications.

In particular, the contractor guarantees that he is the author and rights holder of all materials created by himself in the performance of this tender ("results", such as but not limited to texts, reports) and that he transfers all these rights to the European Commission. In case the contractor is not the author and rights holder, he will be asked to guarantee that he has obtained or will, prior to providing the services, obtain for and transfer to the European Commission all the rights relating to the results provided. The European Commission may use the results with or without mentioning of the source and names of authors.

Furthermore, the contractor will be responsible for clearing the necessary copyrights allowing the European Commission to use the "pre-existing material" (such as but not limited to photos taken from a database in order to illustrate text) as described in these tender specifications.

When participants of events will be photographed, filmed, or have their voice recorded, the contractor will ensure that the correct authorisation forms are signed in advance (getting consent from the participants). The Contracting Authority will provide the contractor with the forms. See article II.13.8 of the General Conditions.

The service contract includes detailed provision related to license or transfer of pre-existing rights (see articles II.13 et I.10) and to the contractor's obligations related to intellectual property rights.

### **3. SIZE OF THE CONTRACT**

The total value for this tender is maximum 75,000.00 EUR per year, and maximum 235,000.00 EUR over three years, reimbursement of expenses included, VAT and price revision excluded.

### **4. CONTRACTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The services specified above will be the subject of a Direct Service Contract drawn up between the European Commission Representation in Ireland and the tenderer to whom the contract is awarded. The draft contract is attached in Annex 2 to the Invitation to Tender.

In drawing up his bid, the tenderer should bear in mind the provisions of this draft contract and, notably:

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Article I.4    | Price  |
| Article I.5    | Payment arrangements   |
| Article I.10   | Exploitation of the results of the Contract  |
| Article II.4   | Performance of the Contract  |
| Article II.4.2 | Compliance with minimum requirements including applicable obligations under environmental, social and labour law |
| Article II.13  | Intellectual property rights   |
| Article II.21  | Payments and guarantees  |

### **5. SUBMISSION OF BIDS**

The tenderer's bid must comprise all the documents required by the checklist in Annex IV Part A. Part B of this annex lists the elements to be provided upon request at a later stage.

### **6. TECHNICAL TENDER**

Tenderers should include in their bid a technical tender detailing how they will perform the tasks covered by the contract, in compliance with all the requirements of the tender specifications.

The technical tender should follow the same structure as the subject of the contract (see Point 2) and should include:

- a description of their methodological approach to perform the tasks covered by the contract, in compliance with all requirements of the tender specifications.
- a description of the measures to be implemented by the contractor for a cost-effective and continuous high performance throughout the contract period, including quality control measures.

In addition, tenderers should submit a proposition for handling the case studies described below:

- a sample action plan (not exceeding 3 A4 pages) on the Juncker Investment Plan, adapted for the Irish public. In preparing this, they may use as a guideline the summary of the overall approach of the Commission from the reference documents (Communication policy and Commission priorities) cited in point 2.
- a proposal (not exceeding 1 A4 page) for the methodology to be used in evaluating the impact of the activities carried out by the Commission in Ireland.

In preparing their offer, tenderers must set out in detail their plans for the development and management of the output described in Point 2.

It must be realistic, and should not exceed 2 A4 pages.

The technical tender should not include any of the documents referred to under the exclusion or selection criteria, nor should it refer to issues already covered by the exclusion and selection criteria.

The technical tender will be assessed in the light of the quality award criteria set out under point 9.

Only technical offers which meet all the minimum technical requirements listed below will be considered compliant and evaluated:

1. By submitting a tender, tenderers declare that their technical offer is compliant with applicable obligations under environmental, social and labour law established by Union law, national law and collective agreements or by the international environmental, social and labour law provisions listed in Annex X to Directive 2014/24/EU.

## **7. FINANCIAL OFFER**

The financial offer must be quoted using the attached form in Annex V, which must be duly signed and dated.

Prices must be fixed and quoted in euros, including for countries which are not in the euro-area.

The prices must be all-inclusive and cover all costs related to performance of the contract as described above.

Travel and subsistence expenses related to ad-hoc missions which are not foreseen in the tender specifications require prior authorisation by the Representation/Unit and will be reimbursed



separately in accordance with Article I.5.3 and II.22 of the draft contract and should not be included in the bid.

## **8. EXCLUSION AND SELECTION CRITERIA**

Compliance with exclusion and selection criteria is evaluated as follows:

At tender submission stage, tenderers should include the following documentation:

- the declaration of honour on exclusion and selection criteria in Annex III duly completed, dated and signed, together with the relevant evidence related to the remedial measures if applicable.

In the case of joint tenders, all the economic operators involved in the tender must provide the declaration of honour on exclusion and selection criteria. In the case of tenders involving subcontracting, the tenderer shall submit a declaration on honour on exclusion and selection criteria, duly dated and signed, from all known subcontractors whose tasks represent more than 20% of the tasks of the contract or who help fulfil the selection criteria.

- the checklist of documents to be provided in Annex IV duly completed, together with the relevant evidence required as a result of answers to the questions in Part A of the checklist and Part V of the Declaration on Honour (Remedial measures).

The other pieces of evidence listed in Part B of Annex IV may be requested by the contracting authority from any tenderer at a later stage. They will in all cases be requested from the winning tenderer. The Contracting Authority may reject the tender if the requested evidence is not provided in due time.

The successful tenderer must provide the documents mentioned as supporting evidence in the declaration on honour 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 each known subcontractors whose tasks represent more than 20% of the tasks of the contract or who help fulfil the selection criteria.

### **8.1. Exclusion criteria**

Bids from tenderers who do not meet the exclusion criteria referred to in Articles 106 and 107 of the Financial Regulation will not be considered for the award of the contract.

### **8.2. Selection criteria**

The tenderer must demonstrate sufficient economic, financial, technical and professional capacity to be able to perform the tasks as specified in point 2 of these specifications.

An economic operator may, where appropriate and for a particular contract, rely on the capacities of other entities to achieve the required level of economic, financial and technical capacity, regardless of the legal nature of the links that it has with them (subcontractor, parent company, third party). It must in that case prove to the contracting authority that it will have at its disposal the resources necessary to perform the contract, for example by producing an undertaking on the part of those entities to place those resources at its disposal (see Point 8.3 below).

If a third party provides the whole or a very large part of the financial capacity, the contracting authority may demand that that entity signs the contract or that it provides a joint and several first-call guarantee, should that tender be awarded the contract.

a) Legal and regulatory capacity

The tenderer will provide a 'Legal Entity File (LEF)' and a 'Bank Account File (BAF)' duly completed and signed, with the necessary annexes. The forms to be used are available at the following addresses:

[http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts\\_grants/info\\_contracts/legal\\_entities/legal\\_entities\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm)

[http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts\\_grants/info\\_contracts/financial\\_id/financial\\_id\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/financial_id_en.cfm)

For joint offers, the LEF should be provided for each consortium member whereas the BAF is requested for the lead entity only.

Tenderers that are already registered in the Contracting Authority's accounting system (i.e. they have already been direct contractors) must provide the form but are not obliged to provide the supporting evidence.

b) Financial and economic capacity

Evidence of financial and economic standing must be provided by the following documents:

- A statement of overall turnover during the last two financial years, with a minimum of EUR 60,000.00 per year (that may be the combined annual turnover of the grouping in case of a joint tender or tender with identified subcontractors).

If, for some exceptional reason which the contracting authority considers justified, the tenderer is unable to provide the references requested by the contracting authority, he may prove his economic and financial capacity by any other means which the contracting authority considers appropriate (evidence of professional risk indemnity insurance, business plan for newly created entities, etc.).

In any case the Contracting Authority must at least be notified of the exceptional reason and its justification in the tender. The Commission reserves the right to request any other document enabling it to verify the tenderers economic and financial capacity.

c) Technical and professional capacity

The tenderers must demonstrate convincingly that they have the ability to undertake the tasks requested.

Any tenderer with a professional conflicting interest that may affect the performance of the contract may be rejected on the basis of not fulfilling selection criteria for professional capacity.

- Criterion 1:

- A professional experience of minimum three years in the field of the contract;
- Experience of professional internet communications;
- A good knowledge of the Institutions and policies of the European Union and their perception by the public.

As evidence, the tenderer must provide detailed descriptions of the services provided in the past three years (with a minimum of 3 services and a maximum of 8) in the domain that is the subject of this call for tender, with proofs of the tenderer's abilities to perform the tasks required including details of similar sized programmes conducted by the tenderer together with copies of written and signed references from the clients concerned proving the efficiency and reliability of the services performed.

- **Criterion 2:**

- Necessary human resources to perform the contract in line with best professional practice:

The staff member carrying out the tasks needed to provide this service should have:

- A university level education (or equivalent) of at least 4 years in length and a minimum of three 3 years of work experience related to the field of this tender or a minimum of 6 years of work experience in the domains covered by this call for tender.
- A perfect command of English is essential and a satisfactory knowledge of Irish (at least B1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)<sup>1</sup> would be an asset.

As evidence, the tenderer must provide a detailed description including CVs of qualified and experienced staff available to perform the services in line with the rules of good practice and best professional practice. A statement of the average annual manpower and the number of staff in the last three years must be provided.

- **Criterion 3:**

- Necessary technical resources to perform the contract in line with best professional practice:

As evidence, the tenderer must provide a description of the infrastructure and equipment available: premises, computer hardware and software, etc.

If the tender is submitted by a consortium, the Contracting Authority shall check the technical and professional capacity at consortium/ group level.

### **8.3. Additional requirements for joint offers and tenders including subcontracting.**

Please refer to the Checklist of documents to be provided (see Annex IV).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/resources/european-language-levels-cefr>

Any change in the composition of the group of service providers during the procurement process (after submission of the offer) is limited to exceptional circumstances (e.g. a take-over) and must be agreed by the Commission.

A change of subcontractor during the procurement process (after submission of the offer) is subject to agreement by the Commission.

The Commission will require a member of a grouping or a subcontractor to be changed if the member of the grouping or subcontractor proposed is in an exclusion situation or does not meet a specific selection criterion.

## 9. AWARD CRITERIA

Bids from tenderers who do not satisfy the exclusion or selection criteria will not be considered for the award of the contract.

The contract will be awarded to the tender offering the best value for money.

### 9.1. Technical evaluation

The technical tender to be submitted as part of the bid (see point 6) will be assessed as follows:

| Criterion   | Explanation of the criterion's scope   | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|--|---------|---------|
| Methodology, timeline and work plan of technical proposal | Relevance and credibility of the proposed timeline and work plan, work distribution among the team (role and responsibilities of each member of the team), interaction with the ordering service, timetable and delivery arrangements.   | 6       | 10      |
| Drafting and updating of an Action Plan                   | Relevance of approach, creativity and quality of details in drafting, credibility of time-line and work plan;  | 6       | 10      |
| Preparation of information material for internet          | Quality of tools proposed to create, update and deliver the material, suitability and attractiveness of the material for the intended audience;  | 6       | 10      |
| Watchdog function"  | Quality and credibility of methodology, evidence of understanding of Irish online platforms and political landscape, intensity of monitoring offered, scope of rebuttal activities proposed;   | 12      | 20      |
| Feedback  | Quality and relevance of the proposed follow-up to actions, especially as regards building up online audiences   | 12      | 20      |
| Social Networking   | Quality of explanation of proposed actions to build audience and leveraging social media platforms to communicate the representation's communication priorities;   | 6       | 10      |
| Case studies  | Relevance, comprehensiveness and cogency of the proposed action plan.<br><br>Quality of the proposed methodology of the evaluation of the impact of the activities carried out by the European Commission Representation in Ireland.<br><br>Quality and relevance of the solution proposed so as to take into account the cultural context of the target | 6       | 10      |

|  |   |           |            |
|--|---|-----------|------------|
|  | group, of the proposed outline of the web content.  |           |            |
| Quality of the measures implemented for a continuous high performance throughout the contract period, including quality control measures | The quality control system applied to the service foreseen in these tender specifications concerning the quality of the deliverables and the continuity of the service. The quality system should be detailed and specific to the tasks at hand; a generic quality system will result in a low score. | <b>6</b>  | <b>10</b>  |
| <b>TOTAL REQUIRED</b>  |   | <b>70</b> | <b>100</b> |

The result of the technical evaluation is the sum of the number of points obtained as a result of the evaluation of each criterion. Only those bids which are awarded at least 60% for each criterion and a total score of at least 70 or more points will be considered for the award of the contract.

## 9.2. Financial evaluation

For the financial bid, the tenderer must use the standard price tables in Annex 3. More details are to be found under Section 7 of this document.

Any omission or amendment to the original price table may cause the bid to be considered null and void.

## 9.3. Award of the contract

The contract will be awarded to the tender achieving the highest score obtained by applying the following formula:

|                    |   |                   |   |   |
|--------------------|---|-------------------|---|---|
| Score for tender X | = | Cheapest price    | * | total quality score (out of 100) for all criteria of tender X |
|                    |   | Price of tender X |   |   |