

Question 1:

To what extent is labor, education and skill development expertise required to set-up the survey questionnaire? From the RFP it seems that experts (ESJS external expert working group) have already been identified and the survey questionnaire is ready but would need additional reviews to ensure the questionnaire is understandable.

As stated in paragraph 2.2 of the call for tender (Global Objectives) “to implement the survey the contractor will use a draft “master questionnaire (in English)” that will be developed and provided by Cedefop (in cooperation with an external expert working group, organised and financed outside of the remit of the contract). The final version of the questionnaire to be used in the fieldwork will be drafted in close consultation with the contractor and revised following extensive cognitive and pilot testing phases”.

Paragraph 2.3 of the call for tender (Requested Services and Outputs) also states that one of the main tasks under work assignment 1 is to “Comment and provide expert advice to fine tune the draft questionnaire provided by Cedefop (prepared in cooperation with an external group of experts and financed outside of the remit of the contract) and, in close collaboration with Cedefop, agree on an English master survey questionnaire. In particular, the contractor will help in refining and proposing alternative formulations and/or phrasing of questions, where appropriate, based on experience with carrying out cross-national comparative surveys. The contractor shall pay particular attention to ensuring that the data collected on education, occupation and industry variables adhere to current international standards ISCED, ISCO and NACE and that a transparent reference approach is utilised.”

Paragraph 2.3.2 of the call for tender (Methodology) also has a specific section on questionnaire development, describing that “The contractor will be expected to advise on whether the formulation of questions is suitable in a comparative cross-country context and if the language used is understandable to the statistical population so as to enable the most valid, reliable and comparable measurements. The contractor should confirm that the expected outcomes of the survey can be realised with the specific questions and statistically measurable variables included in the master questionnaire”.

Inter alia, the section also states that: “Of particular interest for Cedefop is the need to ensure that the collected information on individuals’ education (including education orientation i.e. VET or academic, as for instance implemented in the AES or EU-LFS), occupation and industry is in accordance with current international standards ISCED 2011, ISCO 08 and NACE Rev.2, at a sufficiently detailed level and in line with best practices used for international surveys”.

Section 3.2.2 (Technical and professional capacity) of the call for tender further requests that a *Senior expert on labour market and skills analysis, with emphasis on digitalisation* is part of the core team.

Cedefop therefore does not require from the contractor to be involved in the original set-up of the survey questionnaire. Background work/reports and a (draft yet advanced) version of the survey questionnaire, containing suggested questions and survey items, will be prepared by Cedefop’s experts together with an external group of labour market, education and skills experts, prior to the initiation of the contract. However, Cedefop requires that the contractor possesses adequate labour, education and skill development expertise so as to scrutinise, validate and finalise, in collaboration with Cedefop, the proposed draft questionnaire, drawing on the contractor’s expertise and knowledge in carrying out cross-national comparative social surveys. The contractor’s labour, education and skill development expertise will also be required to ensure that the survey will adopt

effective practices for collecting information on education, occupation and industry variables, in alignment with other mainstream international social surveys.

Question 2:

What is the weight given to labor, education and skill development expertise in developing recommendations from the insights of the survey?

As described in section 2.3 of the call for tender (Methodology) “The contractor should provide an accompanying data summary report that includes all relevant cross tabulations and graphs, with short commentary on interpretation of key insights/findings.” The report should contain analysis of the basic descriptive information and summary statistics (e.g. frequencies, means, standard deviation, minimum/maximum and missing values, correlations between key variables, breakdown by key explanatory factors) of the variables in the dataset and provides short commentary on the main findings/messages of the analysis. The report should include an executive summary with key results and conclusions (approx. 10 pages) and all relevant bibliography and annexes.

The contractor may also be requested to propose alternative taxonomies of technologies used at work and of skill needs based on the data and responses collected in the survey, following the completion of the main fieldwork and compilation of the master dataset (section 2.3.2 of the call for tender ‘Additional refinements to master dataset’).

The contractor is therefore expected to utilise the available labor, education and skill development expertise as part of its core team in order to prepare the data summary report and provide advice as to subsequent potential analyses of interest and preliminary recommendations using the master dataset. However, Cedefop does not require significant weight to be given to labor, education and skill development expertise for the purposes of developing recommendations from the insights of the survey, given that this task will be primarily undertaken by Cedefop experts following the submission of the master dataset and final reports by the contractor. Cedefop also intends to utilise its external expert working group and utilise resources in the wider research community in order to extract key and robust empirical findings and insights from the survey, following the completion of work assignment 7 by the contractor.

Question 3:

To what extent is statistical significance of sub-groups required? Some of survey requirements address people that have been in a certain occupation or being exposed to certain types of learning. Ensuring a random sample selection for the survey is not compatible with having a statistical significance at 3% error margin for certain sub-groups of the sample. Is statistical significance for sub-groups of the population sufficient at EU level/ at country level but with higher error margin? If not, multiple samples will be needed for the same country and the budget to carry out the interviews would quickly increase.

The technical specifications do not restrict the survey to one sampling design only and in particular they do not restrict the survey to a probabilistic random sampling design. Consequently, technical specifications cannot and do not explicitly state any maximum margin of sampling error, acceptable for either final estimates or related breakdowns. The technical specifications address minimum requirements for sampling precision by using a different approach. In particular, Table 3 defines the minimum achieved sample sizes per country and in total. It is clarified that these are to be considered as part of the minimum requirements to be met for sampling precision. In addition, and in compatibility with the total budget for the survey, it is reminded that technical specifications state that “It’s up to the tenderer to propose a larger sample size beyond the minimum of 29,200, taking into account that this will be considered an important quality award criterion (see point 5.2, award sub-criterion AC2.4)”.

In case that the Tenderer proposes a probabilistic random sampling design, and for estimates focussing on the total target population (adult employees as defined in the technical specifications), sample sizes as expressed in Table 3 of the technical specifications are theoretically compatible with absolute margins of errors contained (at 95% level of confidence) in the range of +/- 3 percentage points, both at country and EU level. Cedefop is aware and acknowledges that the situation is considerably different when it comes to estimates focussing on certain subgroups of the target population (e.g. adult employees in certain occupations).

In particular, Cedefop is aware and acknowledges that, at country level, estimates related to sub-groups are likely to be associated with considerably higher margins of errors. In this respect: a) It is confirmed that the primary interest of Cedefop lies in providing information about EU workers (as stated in section 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 of the technical specifications); b) it is clarified that, in the case of estimates related to sub-groups of the target population (e.g. adult employees in certain occupations), Cedefop’s primary interest is to provide estimates for sub-groups of the target population which are primarily defined at EU level (e.g. adult employees in certain occupations at EU level), c) it is clarified that Cedefop is ready to accept higher margins errors of sampling errors for country level estimates of this sub-group type;

It is reminded to potential Tenderers that: i) it is up to tender to propose a larger sample, that is compatible with the total maximum survey budget allocated in the call for tender, ii) proposing a larger sample could be done also to increase the precision of estimates related to sub-groups of the population, both at EU and country level and iii) proposing a larger final sample would increase the quality assessment of the proposal.

In addition it is communicated that Cedefop will decide at a later stage if, which and how to publish this type of estimates that may be subject to a higher margin of error. It is also communicated that data relevant for identifying sub-groups of the target population will also be used as control variables for implementing multivariate statistical modelling, and not necessarily for outputting descriptive statistics.