



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH, SPORT AND CULTURE
Policy Strategy and Evaluation
Evidence-Based Policy and Evaluation

ANNEX I to Invitation to tender

European Commission
Call for tenders EAC/2020/OP/0004
European Expert Network on Economics of Education
Open procedure

TENDER SPECIFICATIONS

Version of April 2019

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1. SCOPE AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCUREMENT

1.1. Contracting authority: who is the buyer?

This call for tenders is launched and managed by the European Commission, referred to as the *Contracting authority* for the purposes of this call for tender, assisted by its Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC).

1.2. Subject: what is this call for tenders about?

The subject of this call for tenders is **European Expert Network on Economics of Education**.

1.3. Lots: is this call for tenders divided into lots?

This call for tenders is not divided into lots.

1.4. Description: what do we want to buy through this call for tenders?

The services that are the subject of this call for tender, including any minimum requirements, are described in detail below.

Variants (alternatives to the model solution described in the Tender Specifications) are not allowed. The *Contracting authority* will disregard any variants described in a tender.

1.4.1. Background and objectives

While the responsibility for the education and training systems lies with the member states, the Treaty¹ provides the EU with a competence to support and supplement the efforts of the member states to improve and modernise their education and training systems.

Education has recently moved to the top of the EU's political agenda, being a key contributor to competitiveness, employability, social inclusion and European citizenship. At the Gothenburg Summit in November 2017, EU leaders proclaimed the European Pillar of Social Rights². The Pillar defines as its first principle that 'everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions on the labour market'. A major task for the European Commission consists in taking concrete actions to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights. The achievement of a European Education Area (EEA) will be a big step in that direction.

¹ Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Art. 165 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT:EN:PDF>

² https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights_en

The progress made towards the EEA will be measured by a broad range of analytical and peer learning tools of which one of most powerful is the use of indicators and targets. For this purpose DG EAC issues annually the Education and Training Monitor which maps the evolution of education and training systems as well as the progress made towards the EEA in a concise, policy-oriented way.

The EU action to achieve the policy goals in education and training while respecting the principle of subsidiarity mainly consists in:

- Supporting the member states in carrying out reforms and investment in education and training, through promoting peer counselling and mutual learning under the Framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) and its successor, which is also one of the main tools for the implementation of the European Education Area;
- Putting education and training at the core of the European Semester to reaffirm the importance of quality and equity in education, in line with the European Pillar of Social Rights, the New Strategic Agenda for the EU (2019-2024), and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Following an in-depth evaluation of all EU education and training systems, the Commission proposes Country-Specific Recommendations to the member states and encourages their implementation through a close dialogue with the national authorities, through the use of cohesion policy funds and the Structural Reform Support Service;
- Promoting cross-country analysis, reports and studies helping EU member states to build a common evidence-base for sound policy decisions;
- Proposing Council Recommendations as a tool of soft law, to promote policy convergence and foster peer learning between member states;
- Leveraging financial instruments (in particular Erasmus+ and its successor), to promote cooperation and mobility.

All these activities require a thorough evidence-based analysis of challenges and opportunities and a close cooperation with EU member states and stakeholders. Investments are also necessary to make the difference. Investing in high quality education and training for all is one of the best means to ensure that everyone can seize the opportunities offered by the current economic and societal transformations.

Based on the described above policy context, the overall objective of this contract is to contribute to the improvement of policy development and cooperation in education and training at European level.

This will be achieved through the setting-up and operation of an advisory network of experts working on economic aspects of education and training that is the specific objective of the contract.

The network to be set-up is a contractual agreement for the provision of expert advice and access to the most relevant evidence to support the European Commission. The European expert network on economics of education will, through its advice, support the European Commission in the analysis of education and training policies and reforms, and of their implications. It will provide access to key knowledge and evidence from the most relevant European and international research on the economic aspects of education and training, including topics that are relevant to international commitments under the UN's 2030 sustainable development goals. Although the main efforts of the network have to be focussed

on and their conclusions and recommendations relevant to the education systems of the EU member states, the network will also be expected to cover other Erasmus+ programme countries, and the Western Balkans region³ insofar as they are committed to voluntarily converge with EU and international standards and are assisted with their reform efforts to prepare for membership.

The Network will also contribute to the dissemination of policy-relevant knowledge and evidence on economic aspects of education and training and more generally act as a *knowledge broker*, bridging the gap between EU policy coordination and the academic world and contributing to the feedback from research to policy.

1.4.2. Detailed characteristics of the network

The European expert network on economics of education will be the direct successor to EENEE (2017-2020).

1. The network has to be **operational as from the entry into force of the contract**. For this purpose, it shall have at its disposal a group of members who are active researchers, scholars, policy analysts or advisors working on economics of education.

The submitted tenders must comply with the following **minimum tender requirements**:

- a) The **composition of the network** shall respect a balanced geographic coverage of the EU member states as well as a good gender balance⁴. The members of the network shall represent⁵ **at least 15 EU member states but their joint expertise shall cover at least all 27 EU member states**. Expertise covering third countries listed in section 1.4.1 above is not compulsory but will be considered as an advantage. The network may include experts from outside the EU. There is no maximum ceiling for the number of members in the network.
- b) **Letters of intent (template is provided in annex 8) from all potential members of the proposed group** stating their willingness to provide the service described in the offer and in line with the present tender specifications have to be submitted with the tender.

Guided by the network's coordination team, the network members are expected to share a common understanding of the objectives of this project, to be committed to collective production of high-quality deliverables, to be generally available, to contribute when necessary in accordance with deadlines and to be fully involved personally.

2. The work of the network will be **focussed on the economic aspects of education and training**, notably, the role of education and training for sustainable growth, expected returns on investment and the efficiency of investment in education and training. Expertise covering both qualitative and quantitative aspects is required. Although the network is primarily advising the Commission on the economics of education and training, an appropriate range of

³ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia

⁴ at least 40% female researchers amongst network members

⁵ will be considered representing an EU member state a network member who has the nationality of or is residing or professionally established in the member state concerned

complementary expertise on other key disciplines related to education and training (sociology, pedagogy, psychology, political science etc.) is also **necessary**.

The network must be able to provide quality advice and support to the European Commission in relation to all types and levels of education in a lifelong learning perspective covering not only schools and formal systems but also early childhood education and care, higher education, non-formal and informal learning.

3. The network will be led by a **coordination team** composed of at least a scientific, a deputy scientific and an administrative coordinator, the latter being responsible for contractual and administrative issues.

The scientific coordinator, supported by the deputy scientific coordinator, will ensure overall coordination, provide strong and proactive steering and will lead the network to perform the various tasks at the highest professional standards. They will ensure the active involvement of the network members in the delivery of services. In addition, both the scientific and the deputy scientific coordinators will seek to continuously promote a better understanding within the network of the European Commission's work with member states, its needs and the nature of output required.

They will have a crucial role and responsibility for content and quality assurance. This means ensuring that all deliverables submitted to the European Commission:

- are highly relevant and as precisely replying as possible to the Commission's request; also academically sound, rigorous and fit for purpose (including for publication);
- draw on the most recent relevant research and on state-of-the-art knowledge; are adequately supported by references to the most relevant evidence; are specific, concise and constructive, even when critical;
- use both qualitative and quantitative data sources; use statistics and figures to illustrate and reinforce analysis and to enhance the credibility of the arguments and recommendations made;
- are expressed in a clear and jargon-free language that can be understood and used by policy-makers and does not need to follow academic writing conventions; effectively synthesise and "translate" key conclusions from research into proposals for concrete policy measures; point to other sources of key information and knowledge on the topic, which are suitable for policy;
- are sufficiently peer-reviewed before being submitted to the Commission (by an independent reviewer or at least two other members of the network).

The coordination team members will be the main contact points and will seek regular communication with the European Commission. They will be responsible for distributing work to network members, for collecting and consolidating their contributions and for sending the results to the European Commission within the agreed deadlines and after adequate quality control (including peer review).

If the coordination team fails to deliver on these aspects, the European Commission may decide either to ask the contractor to formulate proposals for the replacement of the coordination team members, or to terminate the contract.

4. The network members will receive payment only for their contributions according to the rules to be established within the network. The allocation of tasks to members must follow the

closest possible correspondence with individual members' expertise. If sufficient expertise on certain topics/requests is not readily available within the network, the network may draw on the knowledge of external or associated experts and/or consider the addition of new members.

5. Changes in the composition of the network will be possible either at the initiative of the contractor, and subject to consultation with the European Commission, or upon request of the European Commission. While members join or leave the network, the representation of a minimum 15 EU member states, gender balance, EU-wide coverage and complementarity of expertise have to be maintained. If the profile or contribution of a network member fails to correspond to the quality standards required by the contract, the coordination team will inform the European Commission without delay and propose solutions which may include proposals for his/her replacement.

6. In addition to experienced researchers, the network must be able to avail itself of the services of other professionals and competent service-providers such as, for example, web-site designers, research mediators, clear-writing and communication specialists, translators/proof-readers etc., to maximise the quality of the network's outputs, reports and the web-site.

7. The network will complement the work of other knowledge providers of DG EAC, in particular of the Network of Experts on the Social dimension of Education and Training (NESET)⁶. The complementary value of both networks lies, on the one hand, in their specific thematic focuses and, on the other hand, in their capacity to bridge the gap between the EU policy coordination and the academic world. The network must be aware of the outputs of NESET and other knowledge providers of DG EAC, exchange with them on a regular basis and be able to build on their results when relevant. The network must in particular cooperate with NESET, e.g. through joint events or the production of joint or complementary reports.

The network is expected to achieve these results through the implementation of the specific tasks and production of deliverables outlined in the next section.

1.4.3. Tasks and deliverables

The main tasks of the network will be:

1. Quality scientific advice to the European Commission (advisory function);
2. Research reviews for policy makers (knowledge brokerage⁷);
3. Dissemination of the findings and policy conclusions, including website

Workload / number of deliverables per task are provided below to enable the preparation of the tenders. On European Commission's request and with agreement of the contractor, the number of the deliverables per task for each contractual period may be adjusted to align them to the concrete needs, provided those adjustments are budget neutral. All the changes have to be reflected in the annual work programmes, which will be the integral part of the contract.

⁶ See: <http://nesetweb.eu/en/>

⁷ a key feature of knowledge brokerage is the facilitation of knowledge exchange or sharing between and among various stakeholders, including researchers, practitioners, and policy makers (see more [here](#))

Task 1: Quality scientific advice to the European Commission (advisory function)

1) Ad hoc questions. The network will provide guidance and advice on a range of topics through its replies to **up to 10 (ten) *ad-hoc* questions** from the European Commission per year. Such questions will emerge occasionally while the European Commission is preparing important policy documents (such as Communications, Staff Working Documents, e.g. the Education and Training Monitor or public consultation documents) or papers for meetings or to support peer-learning activities for member states, organised by the European Commission in the context of the Open Method of Coordination⁸. These *ad-hoc* questions may also include country-specific questions to support the country analysis under the European Semester process.

The European Commission will send *ad-hoc* questions to the network's coordination team that will be responsible for the allocation of work to network members. Upon receiving such a question, the coordination team will confirm the correct understanding of the request and the feasibility of a reply within the deadline proposed by the European Commission.

Replies to *ad-hoc* questions will be in English. Usually, an answer with a length of 5-10 pages may be needed within a deadline of about 15 days. The network will send to the European Commission only the completed and finalised replies to *ad-hoc* questions. Clarity, references to evidence and other quality requirements, described in Section 1.4.2, apply fully on advice/replies submitted in the context of this task.

Replies to *ad-hoc* questions may, upon approval by the European Commission, be uploaded on the network's web-site.

The authors of replies to *ad-hoc* questions will be paid adequately, according to the rules to be established within the network.

2) Tracking research trends and identifying areas of relevance. The network will proactively inform the European Commission about important news and other developments in the field of economics of education and training and about new findings from research primarily at the European and national levels that are important for policy makers working on economic aspects of education. This process will be initiated by the coordination team and will result in the production of one or two short papers per year aimed at:

- summarising in a non-technical way the most relevant recent articles from top ranked economic journals;
- formulating proposals to the European Commission for reports and European-level initiatives and activities.

3) Participation in conferences and meetings: The advisory function of the network may also include requests for the active participation of network members in meetings, conferences, working groups or other events, such as peer-learning activities organised by the European Commission in the context of the Open Method of Coordination⁸.

⁸ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/open_method_coordination.html

The support to be provided in relation to such events may take different forms. For example the network may be asked to:

- make proposals for content and speakers during the planning of such an event;
- contribute to the programme with speakers (network members or associated experts);
- prepare background papers (either in the format of *ad hoc* reply, short analytical report or policy brief) for distribution prior to or at the event.

As an indicative figure, participation of Network members and its associated experts may be requested for **up to 3 (three) events per year**.

The European Commission will generally cover the travel and accommodation costs of network members or associated experts for their participation in the events that are organised by the European Commission. However such arrangements can depend on the type of each event and have to be confirmed on a case-by-case basis. Other costs incurred by the network in this context (such as communication costs, working hours of network members, cost of papers or analytical reports) will be borne by the network budget.

Task 2: Research reviews for policy makers (knowledge brokerage)

Comprehensive reviews of the evidence from research on specific issues related to the economics of education are important to promote evidence-based policy making in Europe. The main objective of such reviews is to enhance the European Commission's knowledge-base, to support the preparation of political initiatives and the political cooperation and mutual learning at European level.

1) Analytical reports: The network will be asked to prepare **4 (four) short analytical reports** (ca. 25 pages each) per year on topics to be decided by the European Commission. If necessary, they may have annexes in addition.

An analytical report will review the most relevant and recent European and international research on a topic. While drawing largely on academic literature, these reports will be written specifically for policy and decision makers. Writing for policy makers means that the focus of the literature review will be more on research questions and conclusions and less on the methodology. An executive summary and an overall conclusion are essential. They must provide explicit links to the EU policy/framework, translating, where possible, research findings into policy conclusions or recommendations.

All analytical reports will involve at least two network members and/or associated experts. Reports are expected to be of a highest standard and suitable for publication. They must be subject to substantial peer-review by an independent reviewer or at least two members of the network to ensure quality and rigour. They will be written in English in a style that is easily understandable to policy makers. The executive summary will be made available in English, French and German.

The European Commission may publish and disseminate analytical reports widely and valorise them in several ways, including distribution at conferences attended by high numbers of European and national policy makers and other stakeholders. Dissemination activities may also require the presentation of analytical reports by network members at relevant events.

2) Policy briefs: In addition to analytical reports, the network will summarise the main findings of an analytical report or of existing evidence and research on any other key issue related to the economics of education in short *policy briefs* (ca. 2 pages each). The network will be requested to produce ***up to 4 (four) policy briefs*** per year. Such a policy brief must be written in a clear and simple language which is understandable also to non-economists. It will be specifically designed to inform policy makers and other designated stakeholders about key findings and policy advice from research on the economics of education and will be made available in English, French and German.

To maximise the potential of analytical reports and policy briefs, these must fulfil all the quality requirements described in Section 1.4.2. Analytical reports and policy briefs may, upon approval by the European Commission, be published on the network's website.

The authors and reviewers of analytical reports and policy briefs will be paid adequately, according to the rules to be established within the network.

Task 3: Dissemination of the findings and policy conclusions and the network website

The network will once a year take stock of its activities, reflect upon and in collaboration with the European Commission define a tailor-made dissemination strategy for produced deliverables or collected evidence. The strategy will target a wide range of stakeholders working in the area of education and training, including the staff of the European Commission and of other EU institutions, senior education officials from the EU member states, members of ET2020 Working Groups and their equivalents under the new multi-annual programming period and representatives of key international organisations. It will use different and most suitable for the selected audience formats (dedicated seminars, webinars, presentations at events, social media, mailings etc.).

Internet will be used as one of the dissemination channels for sharing findings produced by the network. For this purpose the network will create, maintain and further develop a web-site on economic aspects of education, building upon the existing EENEE web-site⁹. This website will be a gateway to information and knowledge to support primarily the work of policy and decision makers in the wider field of education and training.

The website must be informative and user-friendly. Tenderers are invited to propose any web-site design/architecture/methodology and content categories they believe will best achieve the objectives of this project, in particular wide dissemination of knowledge and brokerage of evidence between research and policy making. While the new website may have a different from the current EENEE website design, it must ensure incorporation and valorisation of the material that it contains.

As a minimum, the network website will include the following elements:

1. Brief information on the network's mission and tasks and information on the network members.

⁹ Currently hosted on www.eenee.org

2. A core section with policy-informing content on key issues related to the economics of education, including a brief and easy-to-understand introduction into the economics of education as a scientific discipline.
3. All activities and main outputs from the network, in particular analytical reports, policy briefs and replies to *ad-hoc* questions developed by the contractor when executing the agreed tasks.
4. Mapping of researchers and practitioners in the field of economics of education.
5. Acknowledgement of the European Union funding.
6. Links to the web-site of the DG EAC, and to the websites of other knowledge providers of DG EAC, in particular NESET (as described in Section 1.4.2 point 7).

The contents of the website must be available in English, French and German. A substantial amount of content in all sections of the website must already be available at the end of month 6 (T0+6).

The website will be updated regularly, maintained throughout the contractual duration by the contractor and archived in such a way that, if required, it can subsequently be hosted and operated by the European Commission or a future contractor without payment of royalties or other charges.

1.4.4. Contract management

The Contracting authority for this contract is defined in section 1.1. Unit A4 will be responsible for managing the contract.

1.4.5. Meetings with the Commission

Representatives of the network will come to Brussels to take stock of the progress, plan further work, clarify working methods and discuss contractual issues with the European Commission. At least one meeting per year must be planned and budgeted for. This meeting may involve variable configurations of the network (e.g. only the coordination team or the coordination team plus the members responsible for the work presented). A kick-off meeting of the Network's coordination team with the Commission will take place at the beginning of the project in accordance with the time schedule provided in 1.6.3 below.

1.4.6. Indicative time schedule

T0	Contract start
T0 + 7 weeks	Submission of draft inception report (only for the initial contract, replaced by the work programme for renewals, not associated with a payment)
T0 + 2 months	Kick-off meeting with the Commission
T0 + 6 months	Submission of progress report + <u>interim payment</u>
T0 + 7 months	Virtual progress meeting with the Commission (<i>if required</i>)
T0 + 12 months	Submission of the final report & final meeting with the Commission + <u>payment of balance</u>

1.4.7. Contractual reporting

The contractor will submit an inception report, a progress report (halfway during the contract period) and a final report at the end of the contract. The reports will mainly be based on the various tasks carried out and on the material collected in this context.

Each report will be submitted in electronic format in English. In the absence of feedback from the European Commission within the deadline, the report will be considered as approved.

In case of additional observations and comments from the European Commission, it must send them to the contractor and suspend the time limit for payment in accordance with Article II.21.7. Within 20 calendar days of receiving the Commission's comments, the contractor will submit the report in definitive form, taking full account of these observations, either by following them precisely or by explaining clearly why they were not followed. Should the European Commission still not consider the report acceptable, the contractor will be invited to amend the report until the European Commission is satisfied.

The inception report (around 5-10 pages + any annexes) will be provided within seven weeks after the commencement date of the initial contract and at least ten calendar days before the kick-off meeting with the European Commission. For renewal periods, the inception report is replaced by the work programme. The inception report will not be associated with any payment. It will include information on:

- the updated list of members of the network and/or associated experts;
- draft work plan;
- proof of progress in constructing the website and some first material;
- any replies to first *ad-hoc* requests by the European Commission.

The progress report (approx. 10 pages of text + any annexes) will be provided within six months of the commencement date of the contract. The progress report will include information on:

- progress on various tasks of the network (including the website);
- any difficulties encountered;
- a non-technical summary of the most relevant articles from top ranked economic journals (5-10 pages) covering recent developments and findings relating to the economics of education that are not yet covered by Commission initiatives, but which might be relevant for future policy cooperation.

If required, the draft progress report can be presented and discussed at the – virtual - progress meeting with the Commission.

The progress report will be accompanied by the invoice for an interim payment.

The final report will include at least the following:

- a description of all the activities carried out;
- the answers to ad-hoc questions;
- executive summaries of all the analytical reports;
- a short report on the development and use of the Network web site, including mapping of experts;
- a forward-looking text (max 5 pages) identifying important themes/issues for future Commission work on economics of education. This could include proposals for future network's analytical reports, policy briefings, country specific work etc.

The final report completed by all its annexes should not exceed 25 pages and will be accompanied by an invoice for payment of the balance.

The draft version of the final report will be submitted at the end of the execution period. The European Commission will then inform the contractor of its acceptance or will pass on its observations within 20 calendar days. The draft final report will be presented and discussed at the final meeting with the Commission. Within 20 calendar days of receiving the Commission's observations, the contractor will submit the final report in definitive form, either taking account these observations or setting out different arguments.

In the absence of observations from the Commission to the draft report, the latter will be considered as accepted by the Commission as final report.

1.4.8. Content, structure and graphic requirements of the deliverables

The contractor must deliver the analytical reports (Task 2) as indicated below.

Content

Analytical report

The report must include:

- an abstract of no more than 200 words and an executive summary of maximum 6 pages, both in English, French and German;
- specific identifiers which must be incorporated on the cover page provided by the Contracting authority;
- the following disclaimer:

“The information and views set out in this [report/study/article/publication...] are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the Commission. The Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this study. Neither the Commission nor any person acting on the Commission's behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained therein.”

Publishable executive summary

The publishable executive summary must be provided in English, French and German and must include:

- specific identifiers which must be incorporated on the cover page provided by the Contracting authority;
- the following disclaimer:

“The information and views set out in this [report/study/article/publication...] are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the Commission. The Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this study. Neither the Commission nor any person acting on the Commission's behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained therein.”

Requirements for publication on Internet

The Commission is committed to making online information as accessible as possible to the largest possible number of users including those with visual, auditory, cognitive or physical disabilities, and those not having the latest technologies. The Commission supports the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 of the W3C.

For full details on the Commission policy on accessibility for information providers, see: http://ec.europa.eu/ipg/standards/accessibility/index_en.htm

For the publishable versions of the study, abstract and executive summary, the contractor must respect the W3C guidelines for accessible pdf documents as provided at: <http://www.w3.org/WAI/>.

Structure

The structure of each analytical report will be discussed and agreed between the Commission, the Network coordination team and the authors upon approval of the Work programme. For this purpose direct contacts will be established on an ad-hoc basis between the representatives of the Commission in charge of each report and the authors.

Graphic requirements

The contractor must deliver all publishable deliverables in full compliance with the corporate visual identity of the European Commission, by applying the graphic rules set out in the European Commission's Visual Identity Manual, including its logo. The graphic rules, the Manual and further information are available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/services/visual_identity/index_en.htm

Professional graphic design

The contractor must apply the rules set out in Visual Identity Manual for the graphic design of both the cover page and the internal pages of the report. The professional font (EC Square Sans Pro) to be used for the publishable deliverables will be made available to the contractor free of charge upon acceptance of the terms and conditions of its use after contract signature. The use of templates for reports is exclusive to European Commission's contractors. No template will be provided to tenderers while preparing their tenders.

The Commission Decision of 12 December 2011 on the reuse of Commission documents applies to the results of this contract.¹⁰

This Decision determines the conditions for the reuse of documents held by the Commission or on its behalf by the Publications Office of the European Union (the Publications Office) with the aim of facilitating a wider reuse of information, enhancing the image of openness of

¹⁰ COMMISSION DECISION of 12 December 2011 on the reuse of Commission documents (2011/833/EU) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:330:0039:0042:EN:PDF>

the Commission, and avoiding unnecessary administrative burdens for re-users and the Commission services alike.

1.5. Place of performance: where will the contract be performed?

The services will be performed at the contractor's premises using its own equipment, except for the time needed for participation in the planned meetings and events as necessary.

1.6. Nature of the contract: how will the contract be implemented?

The procedure will result in the conclusion of a direct contract.

In direct contracts all the terms governing the provision of the services, supplies or works are defined at the outset. Once signed, they can be implemented directly without any further contract procedures.

🔔 Tenderers need to take full account of the provisions of the Draft contract as the latter will define and govern the contractual relationship(s) to be established between the *Contracting authority* and the successful tenderer(s). Special attention is to be paid to the provisions specifying the rights and obligations of the contractor, in particular those on payments, performance of the contract, confidentiality, and checks and audits.

1.7. Volume and value of the contract: how much do we plan to buy?

The estimated total amount of all purchases under this contract is indicated under Heading II.1.5 of the contract notice. The quantities to be purchased over the total duration of the contract are specified in Section 1.4 of these specifications.

1.8. Duration of the contract: how long do we plan to use the contract?

The contract(s) resulting from the award of this call for tenders will be concluded for at most 48 months. The details of the initial contract duration and possible renewals are set out in Article I.3 of the Draft contract.

1.9. Electronic exchange system: can exchanges under the contract be automated?

For all exchanges with the contractor during the implementation of the contract as well as for future possible subsequent proceedings for the purposes of EDES ([European Union's Early Detection and Exclusion System](#)) the *Contracting authority* may use an electronic exchange system meeting the requirements of Article 148 of [Regulation \(EU, Euratom\) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union](#)¹. At the request of the *Contracting authority* the use of such a system shall become mandatory for the contractor(s) at no additional cost for the *Contracting authority*. Details on specifications, access, terms and conditions of use will be provided in advance.

2. GENERAL INFORMATION ON TENDERING

2.1. Legal basis: what are the rules?

This call for tenders is governed by the provisions of [Regulation \(EU, Euratom\) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union](#) (the Financial Regulation)¹¹.

The *Contracting authority* has chosen to award the contract resulting from this call for tenders through an open procedure pursuant to Article 164(1) (a) of the Financial Regulation. In an open procedure any interested economic operator (any natural or legal person who offers to supply products, provide services or execute works) may submit a tender.

2.2. Rules on access to procurement: who may submit a tender?

Participation in this call for tenders 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 has a special agreement with the European Union in the field of public procurement on the conditions laid down in that agreement. Where the Agreement on Government Procurement¹² concluded within the World Trade Organisation applies, the participation to this call for tenders is open to all natural and legal persons established in the countries that have ratified this Agreement, on the conditions laid down therein.

The rules on access to procurement do not apply to subcontractors. Subcontracting may not be used with the intent to circumvent the rules on access to procurement.

To enable *the Contracting authority* to verify the access, each tenderer must indicate its country of establishment (and in case of joint tender – the country of establishment of each group member) and must present the supporting evidence normally acceptable under the law of that country/-ies. The same document(s) could be used to prove country/-ies of establishment and the delegation(s) of the authorisation to sign as described in **Section 4.3**.

¹¹ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 (OJ L 193 of 30.07.2018, p.1).

¹² https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/gp_gpa_e.htm.

♣ *For tenderers established in the United Kingdom:*

Please be aware that following the entry into force of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement* on 1 February 2020 and in particular Articles 127(6), 137 and 138, the references to natural or legal persons residing or established in a member state of the European Union are to be understood as including natural or legal persons residing or established in the United Kingdom. UK residents and entities are therefore eligible to participate under this call.

2.3. Registration in the Participant Register: why register?

Any economic operator willing to submit a tender for this call for tenders must be registered in the [Participant Register](#) - an online register of organisations and natural persons participating in European Commission's calls for tenders or proposals (participants).

On registering each participant obtains a Participant Identification Code (PIC, 9-digit number) which acts as its unique identifier in the Participant Register. A participant needs to register only once – the information provided can be further updated or re-used by the participant in other European Commission's calls for tenders or calls for proposals.

At any moment during the procurement procedure the Research Executive Agency Validation Services (hereafter *the EU Validation Services*) may contact the participant and ask for supporting documents on legal existence and status. The requests will be made through the register's messaging system to the e-mail address of the participant's contact person indicated in the register. It is the responsibility of the participant to provide a valid e-mail address and to check it regularly.

The documents that may be requested by *the EU Validation Services* are listed in the [EU Grants and Tenders Rules on Legal Entity Validation, LEAR appointment and Financial Capacity assessment](#).

♣ **Please note that a request for supporting documents by the *EU Validation Services* in no way implies that the tenderer has been successful.**

2.4. Ways to submit a tender: how can economic operators organise themselves to submit a tender?

Economic operators can submit a tender either as a sole tenderer or as a group of tenderers. In either case subcontracting is permitted.

In order to fulfil the selection criteria set out in **Section 3.2** the tenderer can rely on the capacities of subcontractors or other entities (not subcontractors).

The role of each entity involved in a tender (hereafter referred to as *involved entity*) must be clearly specified: sole tenderer, member of a group or Group leader, subcontractor or an entity on

whose capacities the tenderer relies to fulfil the selection criteria¹³. This applies also where the *involved entities* belong to the same economic group.

2.4.1. Joint tenders

A joint tender is a situation where a tender is submitted by a group (with or without legal form) of economic operators regardless of the link they have between them. The group as a whole is considered a tenderer¹⁴.

All members of the group assume joint and several liability towards the *Contracting authority* for the performance of the contract as a whole.

Group members must appoint a *Group leader* and a single point of contact authorised to act on their behalf in connection with the submission of the tender and all relevant questions, clarification requests, notifications, etc., that may be received during the evaluation, award and until the contract signature. The model power of attorney attached in **Annex 3** is to be used.

The joint tender must clearly indicate the role and tasks of each member and of the *Group leader* who will act as the *Contracting authority's* contact point for the contract's administrative or financial aspects and operational management. The *Group leader* will have full authority to bind the group and each of its members during contract execution. If the joint tender is successful, the *Contracting authority* shall sign the contract with the Group leader, authorised by the other members to sign the contract on their behalf via power of attorney drawn up in the model attached in **Annex 3**.

Changes in the composition of the group during the procurement procedure (after the submission deadline and before contract signature) shall lead to rejection of the tender except in case of a merger or takeover of a member of the group (universal succession), provided that the new entity has access to procurement (see **Section 2.2**) and is not in an exclusion situation, (see **Section 3.1**).

In any case the selection criteria must be still fulfilled by the group and the terms of the originally submitted tender may not be altered substantially, i.e. all the tasks assigned to the former entity must be taken over by the new entity member of the group, the change must not make the tender non-compliant with the Tender specifications, and the evaluation of award criteria of the originally submitted tender may not be modified.

2.4.2. Subcontracting

Subcontracting is the situation where the contractor enters into legal commitments with other economic operators which will perform part of the contract on its behalf. The contractor retains full liability towards the *Contracting authority* for performance of the contract as a whole.

The following shall not be considered subcontracting:

¹³ Such an entity is not considered a subcontractor, see Section 2.4.3.

¹⁴ References to *tenderer* or *tenderers* in this document shall be understood as covering both sole tenderers and groups of economic operators submitting a joint tender.

- a) Use of workers posted to the contractor by another company owned by the same group and established in a member state (“intra-group posting” as defined by Article 1, 3, (b) of [Directive 96/71/EC concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services](#)).
- b) Use of workers hired out to the contractor by a temporary employment undertaking or placement agency established in a member state (“hiring out of workers” as defined by Article 1, 3, (c) of [Directive 96/71/EC concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services](#)).
- c) Use of workers temporarily transferred to the contractor from an undertaking established outside the territory of a member state and that belongs to the same group (“intra-corporate transfer” as defined by Article 3, (b) of [Directive 2014/66/EU on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals in the framework of an intra-corporate transfer](#)) .
- d) Use of staff without employment contract (“self-employed persons working for the contractor”), without the tasks of the self-employed persons being particular well-defined parts of the contract.
- e) Use of suppliers and/or transporters by the contractor, in order to perform the contract at the place of performance, unless the economic activities of the suppliers and/or the transporting services are within the subject of this call for tender (see **Section 1.4**).
- f) Performance of part of the contract by members of an EEIG (European Economic Interest Grouping), when the EEIG is itself a contractor or a group member.

The persons mentioned in points a), b), c) and d) above will be considered as “personnel” of the contractor as defined in the contract.

All contractual tasks may be subcontracted unless the *Technical specifications* expressly reserve the execution of certain critical tasks to the sole tenderer itself, or in case of a joint tender, to a member of the group.

By filling in the form available in **Annex 4**, tenderers are required to give an indication of the proportion of the contract that they intend to subcontract, as well as to identify and describe briefly the envisaged contractual roles/tasks of subcontractors meeting any of these conditions (hereafter referred to as *identified subcontractors*):

- on whose capacities the tenderer relies upon to fulfil the selection criteria as described under **Section 3.2**;
- whose individual share of the contract, known at the time of submission, is above 10%.

Any such subcontractor must provide the tenderer with a commitment letter drawn up in the model attached in **Annex 5.1** and signed by its authorised representative.

Changes concerning subcontractors identified in the tender (withdrawal/replacement of a subcontractor, additional subcontracting) during the procurement procedure (after the submission deadline and before contract signature) require the prior written approval of the *Contracting authority* subject to the following verifications:

- any new subcontractor is not in an exclusion situation;
- the tenderer still fulfils the selection criteria and the new subcontractor fulfils the selection criteria applicable to it individually, if any;

- the terms of the originally submitted tender are not altered substantially, i.e. all the tasks assigned to the former subcontractor are taken over by another involved entity, the change does not make the tender non-compliant with the Tender specifications, and the evaluation of award criteria of the originally submitted tender is not modified.

Subcontracting to subcontractors identified in a tender that was accepted by the *Contracting authority* and resulted in a signed contract, is considered authorised.

2.4.3. Entities on whose capacities the tenderer relies to fulfil the selection criteria

In order to fulfil the selection criteria a tenderer may also rely on the capacities of other entities, regardless of the legal nature of the links it has with them. It must in that case prove that it will have at its disposal the resources necessary for the performance of the contract by producing a commitment letter in the model attached in **Annex 5.2**, signed by the authorised representative of such an entity, and the supporting evidence that those other entities have the respective resources.

If the contract is awarded to a tenderer intending to rely on another entity to meet the minimum levels of economic and financial capacity, the *Contracting authority* may require the entity to sign the contract or, alternatively, to provide a joint and several first-call financial guarantee for the performance of the contract.

With regard to technical and professional selection criteria, a tenderer may only rely on the capacities of other entities where the latter will perform the works or services for which these capacities are required (i.e. the latter will assume the role of subcontractors).

☞ Relying on the capacities of other entities is only necessary when the capacity of the tenderer is not sufficient to fulfil the required minimum levels of capacity. Abstract commitments that other entities will put resources at the disposal of the tenderer will be disregarded.

3. EVALUATION AND AWARD

The evaluation of the tenders that comply with the submission conditions will consist of the following elements:

- Check if the tenderer has access to procurement (see *Section 2.2*);
- Verification of administrative compliance (if the tender is drawn up in one of the official EU languages and signed by duly authorised representative(-s) of the tenderer);
- 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 defined in the Tender specifications;
- Evaluation of tenders on the basis of the award criteria.

The *Contracting authority* will evaluate the abovementioned elements in the order that it considers to be the most appropriate. If the evaluation of one or more elements demonstrates that there are grounds for rejection, the tender will be rejected and will not be subjected to further full evaluation. The unsuccessful tenderers will be informed of the ground for rejection without being given feedback on the non-assessed content of their tenders. Only tenderer(s) for whom the verification of all elements did not reveal grounds for rejection can be awarded the contract.

The evaluation will be based on the information and evidence contained in the tenders and, if applicable, on additional information and evidence provided at the request of the *Contracting authority* during the procedure. If any of the declarations or information provided proves to be false, the *Contracting authority* may impose administrative sanctions (exclusion or financial penalties) on the entity providing the false declarations/information.

For the purposes of the evaluation related to exclusion and selection criteria the *Contracting authority* may also refer to publicly available information, in particular evidence that it can access on a national database free of charge.

3.1. Exclusion criteria

The objective of the exclusion criteria is to assess whether the tenderer is in any of the exclusion situations listed in Article 136(1) of the Financial Regulation.

As evidence of non-exclusion each tenderer needs to submit with its tender a Declaration on Honour¹⁵ in the model available in *Annex 2*.¹⁶ The declaration must be signed by an authorised representative of the entity providing the declaration.

¹⁵ The European Single Procurement Document (ESPD) may not be used yet in European Commission's calls for tenders.

¹⁶ Unless the same declaration has already been submitted for the purposes of another award procedure of the European Commission, the situation has not changed, and the time elapsed since the issuing date of the declaration does not exceed one year.

The initial verification of non-exclusion of tenderers will be done on the basis of the submitted declarations and consultation of the [European Union's Early Detection and Exclusion System](#). The documents mentioned as supporting evidence in the Declaration on Honour need to be provided whenever requested and where this is necessary to ensure the proper conduct of the procedure within a deadline given by the *Contracting authority*¹⁷.

Annex 1 specifies which of the *involved entities* participating in a tender need to provide the Declaration on Honour and, when requested by the *Contracting authority*, the supporting evidence.

Please note that a request for evidence in no way implies that the tenderer has been successful.

3.2. Selection criteria

The objective of the selection criteria is to assess whether the tenderer has the legal, regulatory, economic, financial, technical and professional capacity to perform the contract.

The selection criteria for this call for tenders, including the minimum levels of capacity, the basis for assessment and the evidence required, are specified in the following subsections.

Tenders submitted by tenderers not meeting the minimum levels of capacity will be rejected.

When submitting its tender each tenderer shall declare on honour that it fulfils the selection criteria for the call for tender. The model Declaration on Honour available in *Annex 2* shall be used.

The initial assessment of whether a tenderer fulfils the selection criteria will be done on the basis of the submitted declaration(s).

The subsections below specify which selection criteria evidence must be provided with the tender or may be requested later, at any time during the procurement procedure¹⁸. In any case, to the extent that there is no ground for a waiver, the evidence must be provided, upon request and within a deadline given by the *Contracting authority*. The evidence must be provided in

¹⁷ The obligation to provide the supporting evidence will be waived in the following situations:

- if the same documents have already been provided in a previous award procedure of the European Commission, have been issued no more than one year before the date of their request by the *Contracting authority* and are still valid at that date;
- if such evidence can be accessed by the *Contracting authority* on a national database free of charge, in which case the economic operator shall provide the *Contracting authority* with the internet address of the database and, if needed, the necessary identification data to retrieve the document;
- if there is a material impossibility to provide such evidence.

¹⁸ The obligation to provide the supporting evidence will be waived in the following situations:

- if the same documents have already been provided in a previous award procedure of the European Commission, have been issued no more than one year before the date of their request by the *Contracting authority* and are still valid at that date;
- if such evidence can be accessed by the *Contracting authority* on a national database free of charge, in which case the economic operator shall provide the *Contracting authority* with the internet address of the database and, if needed, the necessary identification data to retrieve the document.

accordance with the applicable basis for assessment of each criterion: in case of a consolidated assessment – only by the *involved entities* who contribute to the fulfilment of the criterion, and in case of individual assessment – by each *involved entity* to whom the criterion applies individually.

3.2.1. Legal and regulatory capacity

Tenderers must prove that they have legal capacity to perform the contract and the regulatory capacity to pursue the professional activity necessary to carry out the work subject to this call for tenders.

If it has not been provided with the Legal Entity Form, the legal and regulatory capacity shall be proven by the evidence listed below:

- For legal persons, 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, or a copy of the publication of such appointment if the legislation applicable to the legal person requires such publication. Any delegation of this authorisation to another representative not indicated in the official appointment must be evidenced.
- For natural persons, if required under applicable law, a proof of registration on a professional or trade register or any other official document showing the registration number.

The listed above evidence must be submitted with the tender and applies to each member of the group in case of a joint tender.

3.2.2. Economic and financial capacity

Tenderers must comply with the following selection criteria in order to prove that they have the necessary economic and financial capacity to perform the contract.

Criterion F1	
Minimum level of capacity	Average yearly turnover of the last two financial years above EUR 300 000.
Basis for assessment	This criterion applies to the tenderer as a whole, i.e. a consolidated assessment of the combined capacities of all involved entities will be carried out.
Evidence	<p><i>Contracts worth more than EUR 260 000</i></p> <p>For contracts worth more than EUR 260 000, proof of economic and financial capacity is provided by the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the declaration on the honour in Annex 2. • the economic and financial capacity analysis form showing the financial data of the economic operator, completed and signed by the operator (see Annex 7b, 'Economic & financial capacity form'); • for economic operators required under national law to keep a complete set of accounts: the annual

	<p>accounts (balance sheet, income statement and annexes) for the last two years for which accounts have been closed;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> for economic operators required under national law to keep a simplified set of accounts: the statement of expenditure and revenue and the annex showing assets and liabilities for the last two financial years for which accounts have been closed; <p>in all cases, a statement of overall turnover and turnover specifically related to the supplies or services covered by the contract for the last two financial years for which accounts have been closed.</p>
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Criterion F2	
Minimum level of capacity	Satisfactory results following the analysis of the financial capacity which will be performed by the <i>Contracting authority</i> based on the methodology provided in Annex 7a.
Basis for assessment	The ratio will be checked against each member of the group in case of joint tender.
Evidence	Same evidence as indicated above for the criterion F1.

☞ All of the above specified evidence of economic and financial capacity must be provided with the tender.

3.2.3. Technical and professional capacity

Tenderers must comply with the following selection criteria in order to prove that they have the necessary technical and professional capacity to perform the contract.

Criteria relating to tenderers

Criterion T1	
The tenderer must prove experience or capacity to carry out international networking activities in the field of education and training research and policy recommendations.	
Minimum level of capacity	At least five similar (in scope and complexity) projects completed in the last five years preceding the tender submission deadline, with a minimum value for each of them €40 000 or two projects with a minimum value for each project of €100 000.
Basis for assessment	This criterion applies to the tenderer as a whole, i.e. the combined capacities of all involved entities.
Evidence	<p>A list of projects meeting the minimum level of capacity. The list shall include details of their start and end dates, scope, role of the tenderer, total project amount and amount invoiced. In case of projects still on-going only the portion completed during the reference period will be taken into consideration.</p> <p>As supporting documents for each project reference the <i>Contracting authority</i> may request statements issued by the clients and take contact with them.</p>

Criterion T2	
The tenderer must prove its capacity to work and to carry out networking activities in a large number of the EU member states.	
Minimum level of capacity	<p>At least three similar (in scope and complexity) projects completed in the last five years preceding the tender submission deadline, implemented in 15 different EU members states.</p> <p>It is the combination of the projects that must cover the required geographical scope.</p>
Basis for assessment	This criterion applies to the tenderer as a whole, i.e. the combined capacities of all involved entities.
Evidence	<p>A list of projects meeting the minimum level of capacity. The list shall include details of their start and end dates scope, role of the tenderer, total project amount and amount invoiced. In case of projects still on-going only the portion completed during the reference period will be taken into consideration.</p> <p>As supporting documents for each project reference, the <i>Contracting authority</i> may request statements issued by the clients and take contact with them.</p> <p>In addition, the <i>Contracting authority</i> may request proofs that the tenderer has contacts in the EU countries not covered by its project experience; for this purpose, the tenderer will provide letters of intent from the contact points.</p>

Criteria relating to the team delivering the service

Criterion T3	
The team delivering the service – network's coordination team - will include, <u>as a minimum</u> , the following profiles: a scientific coordinator, a deputy scientific coordinator and an administrative coordinator, as described below.	
Minimum level of capacity	<p>Scientific coordinator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An education background of post-graduate level with at least 10-year professional experience in economics of education, education and training research and/or policy recommendations; ▪ At least 5-year experience in project management, including overseeing project delivery and quality control of deliverables in a project of at least €100,000 and covering at least 10 countries; ▪ Experience in management of a team of at least three people; ▪ Strong editorial and clear writing skills as guaranteed by articles in scientific journals or publications; ▪ proficient-level knowledge of English (at least C1 level in the Common European Framework for Reference for

	<p>Languages¹⁹), as guaranteed by a certificate or past relevant experience</p> <p><u>Deputy scientific coordinator:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An education background of post-graduate level with at least 7-year professional experience in economics of education, education and training research and/or policy recommendations; ▪ At least 4-year experience in project management, including overseeing project delivery and quality control of deliverables; ▪ Strong editorial and clear writing skills as guaranteed by articles in scientific journals or publications; ▪ Proficient-level knowledge of English (at least C1 level in the Common European Framework for Reference for Languages¹⁸), as guaranteed by a certificate or past relevant experience <p><u>Administrative coordinator:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relevant education background or at least 5-year professional experience in administrative and financial management; ▪ Good organisational skills. ▪ Independent user level of English (at least B2 level in the Common European Framework for Reference for Languages¹⁸), as guaranteed by a certificate or past relevant experience <p>The tenderer should prove that all the experts will be available throughout the duration of the action to perform the tasks described in Section 1.4.2, point 3.</p>
Evidence	<p>The educational and professional qualifications of each person delivering the service under this tender (CVs). Each CV provided should indicate the intended function in the delivery of the service.</p>

☞ All of the above specified evidence of technical and professional capacity must be provided with the tender.

3.3. Compliance with the minimum requirements of the Tender specifications

By submitting a tender a tenderer commits to perform the contract in full compliance with the terms and conditions of the procurement documents for this call for tender. Particular attention is drawn to the minimum requirements specified in Section 1.4.2, point 1 of these specifications and to the fact that tenders must comply with applicable data protection,

¹⁹ See <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/resources/european-language-levels-cefr>

environmental, social and labour law obligations established by Union law, national legislation, collective agreements or the international environmental, social and labour conventions listed in Annex X to Directive 2014/24/EU.

The minimum requirements shall be observed throughout the entire duration of the contract. Compliance with these requirements is mandatory and cannot be subject to any assumptions, limitations, conditions, or reservations on the part of a tenderer.

🔪 Tenders that are not compliant with the applicable minimum requirements shall be rejected.

3.4. Award criteria

The objective of the award criteria is to evaluate the tenders with a view to choosing the most economically advantageous tender.

Tenders will be evaluated on the basis of the following award criteria and their weighting:

Price – 40%

The price considered for evaluation will be the total price of the tender, covering all the requirements set out in the Tender Specifications.

Quality – 60%

The quality of the tender will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Quality of the proposed methodology (60 points - – minimum score 50%)

This criterion will assess the relevance and the quality of the methodology proposed for achieving the results set out in section 1.4 of these specifications based on the grid below:

Sub-criteria	Sub-criterion scope	Max number of points	Min threshold
1.1 Efficiency of the approach to successfully carry out advisory and knowledge brokerage functions of the network (Tasks 1&2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- quality and relevance of the available expertise, incl. additional expertise;- writing for policy makers skills;- knowledge of the EU policy and strategic framework in education and training;- geographical coverage and gender balance in the proposed group of members;- proficiency in English and knowledge of other languages;- mechanism for tracking research trends and informing the European Commission about latest developments in the field;- interactions with other partners working in the same or complementary fields;	38	19

1.2 Quality of the dissemination strategy and the website (Task 3)	Dissemination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - quality and efficiency of the approach; - variety of formats proposed to enhance the dissemination. Website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - structure and thematic coverage; - valorisation of the previous materials; - keeping the website up to date; - mapping of experts in the field; - proposals to enhance the visibility. 	22	11
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2. Organisation of the work and resources (20 points – minimum score 50%)

This criterion will assess how the roles and responsibilities of the proposed coordination team (in case of joint tenders, including subcontractors if applicable) are distributed for each task.

This criterion also assesses the global allocation of time and resources to the project and to each task or deliverable described in section 1.4 of these specifications, and whether this allocation is adequate for the work. The tender must provide details on the allocation of time and resources and the rationale behind the choice of this allocation. It will be evaluated based on the grid below:

Sub-criteria	Sub-criterion scope	Max number of points	Min threshold
2.1 Allocation of time and resources	Coherence in definition of roles and responsibilities in the coordination team and corresponding workload.	12	6
2.2 Network organisation and internal arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - efficiency of the proposed interactions with the Commission; - coherence of proposed internal rules, including payment of network members for their contributions. 	8	4

3. Quality control measures (20 points – minimum score 50%)

This criterion will assess the quality control system applied to the service described in these specifications concerning the quality of the deliverables, the language quality check, and continuity of the service in case of absence of a member of the team. The quality system must be detailed in the tender and specific to the tasks at hand; a generic quality system will result in a low score. The assessment will be made based on the grid below:

Sub-criteria	Sub-criterion scope	Max number of points	Min threshold
3.1 Coordination team and network members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Availability and personal commitment of coordination team members; - Highest professional standards in network activities; - Short notice availability of the required expertise and business continuity. 	10	5

3.2 Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality control approaches to ensure high-quality and high-relevance deliverables (meeting needs, reliability of data, valid conclusions, useful recommendations, language quality etc.) - Risk analysis and mitigation plan. 	10	5
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The maximum total quality score is 100 points.

Tenders must score minimum 50% for each criterion and sub-criterion, and minimum 65% in total. Tenders that do not reach the minimum quality levels will be rejected and will not be ranked.

3.5. Award (ranking of tenders)

Tenders shall be ranked according to the best price-quality ratio in accordance with the formula below:

score for tender X	=	$\frac{\text{cheapest price}}{\text{price of tender X}}$	*	100	*	40%	+	total quality score (out of 100) for all award criteria of tender X	*	60%
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👉 The contract shall be awarded to the tender ranked first, which complies with the Tender Specifications and is submitted by a tenderer having access to procurement, not in an exclusion situation and fulfilling with the selection criteria.

4. FORM AND CONTENT OF THE TENDER

4.1. Form of the tender: how to submit the tender?

Tenders are to be submitted via the e-Submission application according to the instructions laid down in the Invitation to tender letter and the [e-Submission Quick Guide](#).

👉 Make sure you prepare and submit your electronic tender in e-Submission early enough to ensure it is received within the deadline specified under Heading IV.2.2 of the contract notice. A tender received after this deadline will be rejected.

4.2. Content of the tender: what documents to submit with the tender?

The documents to be submitted with the tender in e-Submission are listed in *Annex 1*.

The following requirements apply to the technical and financial offer (to be uploaded as Technical tender and Financial tender in e-Submission):

- *Technical offer.*

The technical offer must provide all the information needed to assess the compliance with Section 1.4 of these specifications and the award criteria. Tenders deviating from the minimum requirements or not covering all the requirements may be rejected on the basis of non-compliance and not evaluated further.

- *Financial offer.*

A complete financial offer, including the breakdown of the price needs to be uploaded. For this purpose, the Financial Model in *Annex 6* shall be completed, duly signed and uploaded in e-Submission.

It is the responsibility of each tenderer to ensure that the total amount of the tender inserted in the relevant field of the e-Submission application corresponds to the amount indicated in the uploaded financial offer. In case of discrepancies, only the amount indicated in the financial offer will be taken into account.

The financial offer shall be:

- expressed in euros. Tenderers from countries outside the euro zone have to quote their prices in euro. The price quoted may not be revised in line with exchange rate movements. It is for the tenderer to bear the risks or the benefits deriving from any variation.
- quoted free of all duties, taxes and other charges, i.e. also free of VAT. The tenderer may indicate the amount of VAT but it must be shown separately.

👉 The European Union Institutions are exempt from such charges in the EU under Articles 3 and 4 of the Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the European Union of 8 April 1965 annexed to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. Exemption is granted to the Commission by the governments of the member states, either through refunds upon presentation of documentary evidence or by direct exemption.

For those countries where national legislation provides an exemption by means of a reimbursement, the amount of VAT must be shown separately. In case of doubt about the applicable VAT system, it is the tenderer's responsibility to contact his or her national authorities to clarify the way in which the European Union is exempt from VAT.

4.3. Signature policy: how can documents be signed?

Where a document needs to be signed, the signature must be either hand-written, a qualified electronic signature or an advanced electronic signature based on a qualified certificate as defined in [Regulation \(EU\) No 910/2014 on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market \(the eIDAS Regulation\)](#).

For hand-written signatures see Section 1 of the Invitation to tender.

For electronic signatures see:

<https://ec.europa.eu/cefdigital/wiki/display/CEFDIGITAL/Introduction+to+e-signature>

All documents must be signed by the signatories (when they are individuals) or by their duly authorised representatives.

For the following documents, when signed by representatives, tenderers must provide evidence for the delegation of the authorisation to sign:

- The Tender report;
- The Declaration on Honour of the tenderer (in case of joint tender – the Declarations on Honour of all group members);
- (If applicable – in the case of joint tender) the power(s) of attorney drawn up using the model attached in *Annex 3*).

The delegation of the authorisation to sign on behalf of the signatories (including, in the case of proxy(-ies), the chain of authorisations) must be evidenced by appropriate written evidence (copy of the notice of appointment of the persons authorised to represent the legal entity in signing contracts (together or alone), or a copy of the publication of such appointment if the legislation which applies to signatory requires such publication or a power of attorney). A document that the Contracting authority can access on a national database free of charge does not need to be submitted if the Contracting authority is provided with the exact internet link and, if applicable, the necessary identification data to retrieve the document.

4.4. Confidentiality of tenders: what information and under what conditions can be disclosed?

Once the *Contracting authority* has opened a tender, it becomes its property and shall be treated confidentially, subject to the following:

- For the purposes of evaluating the tender and, if applicable, implementing the contract, performing audits, benchmarking, etc., the *Contracting authority* is entitled to make available (any part of) the tender to its staff and the staff of other Union institutions, agencies and bodies, as well to other persons and entities working for the

Contracting authority or cooperating with it, including contractors or subcontractors and their staff provided that they are bound by an obligation of confidentiality.

- After the signature of the award decision tenderers whose tenders were received in accordance with the submission modalities, who have access to procurement, who are not found to be in an exclusion situation referred to in Article 136(1) of the FR, who are not rejected under Article 141 of the FR, whose tenders are not found to be incompliant with the procurement documents, and who make a request in writing will be notified of the name of the tenderer to whom the contract is awarded, the characteristics and relative advantages of the successful tender and the price of the offer and/or contract value. The *Contracting authority* may decide to withhold certain information that it assesses as being confidential, in particular where its release would prejudice the legitimate commercial interests of economic operators or might distort fair competition between them. Such information may include, without being limited to, confidential aspects of tenders such as unit prices included in the financial offer, technical or trade secrets²⁰.
- The *Contracting authority* may disclose the submitted tender in the context of a request for public access to documents, or in other cases where the applicable law requires its disclosure. Unless there is an overriding public interest in disclosure²¹, the *Contracting authority* may refuse to provide full access to the submitted tender, redacting the parts (if any) that contain confidential information, the disclosure of which would undermine the protection of commercial interests of the tenderer, including intellectual property.

👉 The *Contracting authority* will disregard general statements that the whole tender or substantial parts of it contain confidential information. Tenderers need to mark clearly the information they consider confidential and explain why it may not be disclosed. The *Contracting authority* reserves the right to make its own assessment of the confidential nature of any information contained in the tender.

²⁰ For the definition of trade secrets please see Article 2 (1) of DIRECTIVE (EU) 2016/943 on the protection of undisclosed know-how and business information (trade secrets) against their unlawful acquisition, use and disclosure.

²¹ See Article 4 (2) of the REGULATION (EC) No 1049/2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents.

APPENDIX: LIST OF REFERENCES

<i>Award criteria</i>	See Section 3.4
<i>Contracting authority</i>	See Section 1.1
<i>Entities on whose capacities the tenderer relies to fulfil the selection criteria</i>	See Section 2.4.3
<i>EU Validation services</i>	See Section 2.3 EU Grants and Tenders Rules on Legal Entity Validation, LEAR appointment and Financial Capacity assessment
<i>Exclusion criteria</i>	See Section 3.1
<i>Financial Regulation</i>	Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union
<i>Group leader</i>	See Section 2.4.1
<i>Identified subcontractors</i>	See Section 2.4.2
<i>Involved entities</i>	See Section 2.4
<i>Joint tender</i>	See Section 2.4.1
<i>Participating entities</i>	See Section 1.1
<i>Participant Register</i>	See Section 2.3 https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/participant-register
<i>Selection criteria</i>	See Section 3.2
<i>Sole tenderer</i>	See Section 2.4
<i>Subcontracting/subcontractor</i>	See Section 2.4.2
<i>Treaties</i>	The EU Treaties: https://europa.eu/european-union/law/treaties_en

ANNEXES

Annex 1. List of documents to be submitted with the tender or during the procedure

Description	Sole tenderer	Joint tender		Identified Subcontractor	Entity on whose capacity is being relied	When and where to submit the document?	Instructions for uploading in eSubmission (if applicable)	
		Group leader	Member of the group				How to name the file?	Where to upload?
1. Identification and information about the tenderer.								
<div><div>eSubmission view</div><div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div><div>Ways to submitPartiesLotsTender DataTender reportSubmit tender</div></div></div>								
Declaration on Honour on Exclusion and Selection Criteria (see Section 3.1) model in Annex 2. Declaration on Honour on exclusion and selection criteria	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	With the tender in e-Submission	'Declaration on Honour'	With the concerned entity under 'Parties' → 'Identification tenderer' → 'Attachments' → 'Declaration on Honour'.
Evidence that the person signing the documents is an authorised representative of the entity ²²	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			With the tender in e-Submission	'Authorisation to sign' documents'.	With the concerned entity under 'Parties' → 'Identification tenderer' → 'Attachments' → 'Other documents'.

²² A document that the Contracting authority can access on a national database free of charge does not need to be submitted if the Contracting authority is provided with the exact internet link and, if applicable, the necessary identification data to retrieve the document.

Power of attorney (see Section 2.4.1) model in Annex 3. Power of attorney			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			With the tender in e-Submission	'Power of attorney'	In the Group leader's section under 'Parties' → 'Identification tenderer' → 'Attachments' → 'Other documents'.
Commitment letter (see Section 2.4.2 and 2.4.3)				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (model in Annex 5.1)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (model in Annex 5.2)	With the tender in e-Submission	'Commitment letter'	With the concerned entity under 'Parties' → 'Identification tenderer' → 'Attachments' → 'Other documents'.
Evidence of non-exclusion (see Section 3.1)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Only upon request by <i>the Contracting authority</i> At any time during the procedure	n.a.	n.a.
Evidence of legal existence and status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Only upon request by <i>the EU Validation services</i> At any time during the procedure In the Participant Register	n.a.	n.a.
Evidence of legal capacity (see Section 3.2.1)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Only upon request by <i>the Contracting authority</i> At any time during the procedure	n.a.	n.a.
Evidence of economic and financial capacity F1 (see Section 3.2.2)	The documents must be provided only by the <i>involved entities</i> who contribute to reaching the minimum capacity level for criterion F1					With the tender in e-Submission	'Balance_sheet_entity_year" Profit_Loss_Account_entity_year"	With the Group leader or the sole tenderer under 'Parties' → 'Identification tenderer' → 'Attachments' → 'Economic and financial capacity'.

Evidence of economic and financial capacity F2 (see Section 3.2.2)	The documents must be provided only by the <i>involved entities</i> who contribute to reaching the minimum capacity level for criterion F2					With the tender in e-Submission	'Balance_sheet_entity_year" Profit_Loss_Account_entity_year"	With the Group leader or the sole tenderer under 'Parties' → 'Identification tenderer' → 'Attachments' → 'Economic and financial capacity'.
Evidence of technical and professional capacity T1 (see Section 3.2.3)	The documents must be provided only by the <i>involved entities</i> who contribute to reaching the minimum capacity level for criterion T1					With the tender in e-Submission	'5_project_references_networking"	With the Group leader or the sole tenderer under 'Parties' → 'Identification tenderer' → 'Attachments' → 'Technical and professional capacity'.
Evidence of technical and professional capacity T2 (see Section 3.2.3)	The documents must be provided only by the <i>involved entities</i> who contribute to reaching the minimum capacity level for criterion T2					With the tender in e-Submission	'3_project_references_EU-coverage"	With the Group leader or the sole tenderer under 'Parties' → 'Identification tenderer' → 'Attachments' → 'Technical and professional capacity'.
Evidence of technical and professional capacity T3 (see Section 3.2.3)						With the tender in e-Submission	'CVs_coordination-team'	With the Group leader or the sole tenderer under 'Parties' → 'Identification tenderer' → 'Attachments' → 'Technical and professional capacity'.

2. Tender data.

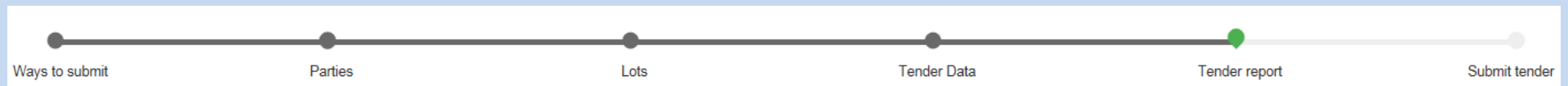


Failure to upload the following documents in eSubmission will lead to rejection of the tender.

Technical offer (see Section 4.2)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				With the tender in e-Submission	'Technical tender'	Under section 'Tender Data' → 'Technical Tender'
Financial offer (see Section 4.2)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				With the tender in e-Submission	'Financial tender'	Under 'Tender Data' → 'Financial Tender'

3. Tender report.

Once all information and documents have been encoded and uploaded in the e-Submission application and you consider that the tender is complete, the application will require you to download the Tender Report generated by the e-Submission application. It will have to be signed (hand signature or electronic signature) and uploaded, as explained in the [eSubmission Quick Guide](#).



Tender report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				With the tender in e-Submission	'Tender report'	Under section 'Tender report'
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Annex 2. Declaration on Honour on exclusion and selection criteria

(see a separate file)

Annex 3. Power of attorney

Call for tenders **XXX/XX/XX/20XY/XYZ** -

[TITLE OF THE PROCEDURE]

POWER OF ATTORNEY

The undersigned:

– Signatory (Name, Function, Company, Registered address, VAT Number)

having the legal capacity required to act on behalf of his/her company,

HEREBY AGREES TO THE FOLLOWING:

- 1) To submit a joint tender as a member of a group of tenderers (the Group), constituted by Company 1, Company 2, Company N (Group members), and led by Company 1 (Group leader), in accordance with the conditions specified in the Tender specifications and the terms specified in the tender to which this Power of attorney is attached.
- 2) If the Contracting authority awards the contract resulting from this call for tenders to the *Group* on the basis of the joint tender to which this power of attorney is attached, all *Group members* shall be considered parties to the contract in accordance with the following conditions:
 - (a) All *Group members* shall be jointly and severally liable towards the Contracting authority for the performance of the contract.
 - (b) All *Group members* shall comply with the terms and conditions of the contract and ensure the proper delivery of their respective share of the services and/or supplies subject to the contract.
- 3) Payments by the Contracting authority related to the services and/or supplies subject to the Contract shall be made through the bank account of the *Group leader*: **[Provide details on bank, address, account number]**.
- 4) The *Group members* grant to the *Group leader* all the necessary powers to act on their behalf in the submission of the tender and the conclusion of the contract, including:
 - (a) The *Group leader* shall submit the tender on behalf of all *Group members* and indicate in the "Tender Contact Info" section in e-Submission the name and e-mail address of an individual - single point of contact authorised to communicate officially with the Contracting authority in connection with the submitted tender on behalf of all *Group members*, including in connection with all relevant questions, clarification requests, notifications, etc., that may be received during the evaluation, award and until the contract signature.
 - (b) The *Group leader* shall sign any contractual documents — including the contract, and amendments thereto — and issue any invoices related to the performance of the contract on behalf of all *Group members*.
 - (c) The *Group leader* shall act as a single contact point with the Contracting authority in the

delivery of the services and/or supplies subject to the contract. It shall co-ordinate the delivery of the services and/or supplies by the *Group* to the Contracting authority, and shall see to a proper administration of the contract.

Any modification to the present Power of attorney shall be subject to the Contracting authority's express approval. This Power of attorney shall expire when all the contractual obligations of the *Group* have ceased to exist. The parties cannot terminate it before that date without the Contracting authority's consent.

Place and date:

Name (in capital letters), function, company and signature:

Annex 4. List of identified subcontractors

Identification details	Roles/tasks during contract execution	Proportion of subcontracting (% of contract volume)
[Full official name Registered address Statutory registration number VAT registration number]		
[Full official name Registered address Statutory registration number VAT registration number]		
[REPEAT AS MANY TIMES AS THE NUMBER OF IDENTIFIED SUBCONTRACTORS]		
Other subcontractors that do not need to be identified under Section 2.4.2		
	TOTAL % of subcontracting	0,00%

Annex 5.1. Commitment letter by an identified subcontractor

[Letterhead, if any]

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Call for tenders Ref. [reference number]

Attn:

[Insert date]

Commitment letter by identified subcontractor

I, the undersigned,

Name:

Function:

Company:

Registered address:

VAT Number:

having the legal capacity required to act on behalf of the company [insert name of the entity] hereby confirm that our company agrees to participate as subcontractor in the offer of [insert name of the tenderer] for the Call for Tenders [insert reference number] – [insert title of procedure] Lot [insert lot number].

In the event that the tender of the aforementioned tenderer is successful, [insert name of the subcontractor] commits itself to make available the resources necessary for performance of the contract as a subcontractor and to carry out the services that will be subcontracted to it in compliance with the terms of the contract. It further declares that it is not subject to conflicting interests which may negatively affect the contract performance and that it accepts the general conditions attached to the Tender Specifications for the above call for tender, in particular the contractual provisions related to checks and audits.

Done at:

Name:

Position:

Signature:

Annex 5.2. Commitment letter by an entity on whose capacities is being relied

[Letterhead, if any]

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Call for tenders Ref. [reference number]

Attn:

[Insert date]

Commitment letter by an entity on whose capacity is being relied

I, the undersigned,

Name:

Function:

Company:

Registered address:

VAT Number:

having the legal capacity required to act on behalf of the company [insert name of the entity] hereby confirm that our company **authorises the** [insert name of the tenderer] **to rely on its financial and economic capacity in order to meet the minimum levels** required for the Call for Tenders [insert reference number] – [insert title of procedure] Lot [insert lot number].

In the event that the tender of the aforementioned tenderer is successful, [insert name of the entity] commits itself to make available the resources necessary for performance of the contract. It further declares that it is not subject to conflicting interests which may negatively affect the contract performance, and that it accepts the general conditions attached to the Tender Specifications for the above call for tender, in particular the contractual provisions related to checks and audits.

Done at:

Name:

Position:

Signature:

Annex 6. Financial offer form

(see a separate file)

Annex 7a. Methodology for evaluating the financial capacity of tenderers/candidates for public contracts

Like all the other Directorates-General of the Commission, the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC) uses public contracts to purchase the goods and services it needs to pursue its objectives: research, technical assistance, advice, conferences, advertising services, documentation, IT equipment, etc.

In principle, public contracts are awarded following invitations to tender published in the Official Journal.

Once tenders from the candidates or tenderers have been submitted, they are subjected among other things to an assessment on the basis of the selection criteria, including verification of financial capacity.

In order to perform this assessment of financial capacity, DG EAC established a methodology in accordance with Article 167 of the Financial Regulation (FR²³), and points 18 and 19 of Annex 1 to FR.

This methodology describes the scope, the documents required of the tenderers and candidates and, where an actual analysis is performed, the financial ratios used as well as the interpretation of the results obtained.

The financial analysis is based on the general guidelines (liquidity, solvency, profitability) of the Directorate-General for Budget (DG BUDG). The selected ratios and the thresholds applied are also those proposed by the same DG.

1. SCOPE

Evaluation of financial capacity as selection criteria applies to all tender procedures.

In accordance with point 18.5 of Annex 1 to FR, proof of financial capacity cannot be required for contracts worth EUR 144 000 or less.

It was decided at DG EAC that a financial capacity analysis (based on financial ratios) would be carried out when the value of the contract exceeds EUR 260 000. For values above this threshold, proof of financial capacity will be required on a case-by-case basis according to the hypothetical cases presented in points 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 below, and the financial analysis will be performed as described in point 4.

2. ENTITIES SUBJECT TO THE EXAMINATION OF FINANCIAL CAPACITY

- All the economic operators, including natural persons, involved in the tender procedure.

²³ [Regulation \(EU, Euratom\) 2018/1046 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, repealing Regulation \(EU, Euratom\) No 966/2012 \(2012 Financial Regulation\), OJ L 193, 30/07/2018, page 1](#)

- For a consortium, the leader and all the members of the consortium.
- In the case of sub-contracting, all the subcontractors, provided that the subcontracting value is 10 % or more of the value of the contract.

3. DOCUMENTS DEMONSTRATING THE FINANCIAL CAPACITY OF THE TENDERERS/CANDIDATES

3.1. Contracts worth EUR 144 000 or less

For contracts of this type, proof of financial capacity consists of a solemn declaration by the economic operator (see Annex 2 of the Call for Tenders, "Declaration on honour on exclusion criteria and selection criteria").

3.2. Contracts worth more than EUR 144 000 but equal to or less than EUR 260 000

For this category of contracts, in addition to the solemn declaration mentioned at the point 3.1, proof of financial capacity is also provided by a statement of overall turnover and turnover specifically related to the supplies or services covered by the contract for the last two financial years for which accounts have been closed.

However, in case of doubt, the assessment committee reserves the right to request supporting documents and to carry out a financial analysis as described in point 4 below.

Along similar lines, entities falling into one of the following high-risk categories must provide proof of their financial capacity (see points 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 below) and are required to undergo the financial analysis provided for in point 4 below:

- newly-established entities which have existed for less than a year and for which no financial history is available;
- new entities which have existed for between one and three years;
- entities against which one or more expired and unpaid recovery orders have been issued by DG EAC;
- entities that are the subject of suspicions of or findings relating to serious administrative errors or fraud;
- entities against which legal proceedings have been brought for serious administrative errors or fraud.

3.3. Contracts worth more than EUR 260 000

For contracts worth more than EUR 260 000, proof of economic and financial capacity is provided by the following documents:

- the solemn declaration requested at point 3.1.
- the economic and financial capacity analysis form showing the financial data of the economic operator, completed and signed by the operator (see Annex 7b "Economic and Financial Analysis);

- for economic operators required under national law to keep a complete set of accounts: the annual accounts (balance sheet, income statement and annexes) for the last two years for which accounts have been closed;
- for economic operators required under national law to keep a simplified set of accounts: the statement of expenditure and revenue and the annex showing assets and liabilities for the last two financial years for which accounts have been closed;
- in all cases, a statement of overall turnover and turnover specifically related to the supplies or services covered by the contract for the last two financial years for which accounts have been closed.

3.4. Exceptional cases referred to in point 19.3 paragraph 2 of Annex 1 to FR

If, for some exceptional reason which the contracting authority considers justified, the operator is unable to provide the documents required, it may prove its economic and financial capacity by any other means deemed appropriate.

3.5. Special cases

Natural persons

Natural persons, in spite of the form in which they participate in a market (eg sole tenderer, consortium member or subcontractor) do not have to provide proof of their financial capacity other than by the solemn declaration attached in Annex 2 of the Call for Tenders, "Declaration on honour on exclusion criteria and selection criteria". This applies to all cases described at point 3

Recently established entities (in existence for less than two years)

In the case of recently established entities which have not yet closed accounts for two financial years and which are therefore considered high-risk, the annual accounts for a single year (if available) will be required, together with interim accounts, the solemn declaration, the economic and financial analysis form and statement of turnover provided for in point 3.3. These interim accounts must cover the period between the date of establishment of the entity and the publication date of the tender. This applies to contracts worth more than EUR 260 000 but also to those worth between EUR 144 000 and EUR 260 000, given that new entities are considered to be risky.

For low and middle value contracts (up to EUR 144 000 for service and supply contracts), the solemn declaration provided for in point 3.1 is sufficient.

Recent acquisition, merger and incorporation

The annual accounts for the last two years for which accounts have been closed will be required for **all** the entities involved in these incorporation, acquisition and merger operations (except recent entities, see above) in accordance with the scenarios set out in point 3 ('Documents').

Consortia and subcontractors

In the case of consortia, both the leader and all members of the group are required to submit the documents proving their financial capacity in accordance with the scenarios set out in point 3 ('Documents').

The sub-contractors referred to in point 2 above ('Entities subject...') must also submit documents to prove their financial capacity, in accordance with the scenarios set out in point 3 ('Documents').

N.B. The various headings in point 3 concerning documents apply to all the entities referred to in point 2.

4. FINANCIAL ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

The financial analysis involves calculating a series of financial ratios based on the financial data declared in Annex 7b "Economic and Financial Analysis" and verified on the basis of the financial documents required.

4.1. Financial ratios

Two types of calculation are used by type of economic operator, differentiated by the requirement to keep either a complete or a simplified set of accounts.

a. Economic operators keeping full accounts

Financial independence = own funds/total liabilities

Financial independence makes it possible to determine the proportion of own funds in total liabilities and therefore to measure the economic operator's degree of independence in relation to third-party funds. A ratio of less than 20 % is considered to be negative.

Debt ratio = own funds/medium- and long-term debts

This ratio measures the solvency and independence of the operator, by analysing the composition of the liabilities on the balance sheet. A ratio of less than 30 % will be considered to be negative.

Profitability = Gross operating surplus/turnover

This ratio measures the proportion of economic surplus generated by the operation, once operating expenses have been deducted.

These are the funds really generated by the operation. They must be positive and sufficient to cover:

- depreciation;
- financial charges;
- any exceptional charges;

- the need for a business to make a profit.

There must therefore actually be a surplus (the ratio must be positive). A ratio of less than 10 % will be considered to be negative.

Liquidity = (available funds + claims)/current liabilities

This ratio measures whether total current assets actually cover current liabilities and therefore indicates whether the economic operator will be able to meet its current liabilities.

The value of this ratio must be equal to or higher than 1. Otherwise, current assets do not suffice to cover current liabilities, and the economic operator may not be able to meet its liabilities in the very near future (in less than a year).

Coverage ratio of third-party funds by self-financing capacity = self-financing capacity/medium- and long-term debts

This coverage ratio measures the proportion of medium- and long-term debts which could be reimbursed by the self-financing capacity of the financial year. It therefore measures the reimbursement capacity.

A value of 25 % means that four times the self-financing capacity of the last financial year is needed to reimburse medium- and long-term liabilities. Since this can be done only if the business does not invest and does not incur other medium- and long-term debts (and if profitability stays at the same level), a ratio of less than 25 % will be considered to be negative.

Activity index = (Total amount of tender/duration)/self-financing capacity

This ratio measures the weight between the annual value of the tender and the annual turnover of the tenderer.

b. Economic operators keeping simplified accounts

Financial independence = own funds/total liabilities

Financial independence makes it possible to determine the proportion of own funds in total liabilities. Sound financial autonomy is demonstrated by values above 20 %.

Liquidity = (available funds + claims)/current liabilities

This ratio measures whether total current assets actually cover current liabilities and therefore indicates whether the entity will be able to meet its current liabilities.

The value of this ratio must be equal to or higher than 1. Otherwise, current assets do not suffice to cover current liabilities, and the entity may not be able to meet its liabilities in the very near future (in less than a year).

Debt ratio = own funds/medium- and long-term debts

This ratio measures the solvency and independence of the operator. For sound financial autonomy, this ratio must be above 30 %.

$$\text{Adequacy of own funds} = \text{own funds} / \text{total revenue}$$

This is the ratio of stable resources to total revenue, and measures the number of periods available to the entity to maintain its activity using own funds. A high value is therefore an indication of the entity's "survival" capacity. A ratio of less than 25 % is considered to be negative.

$$\text{Activity index} = (\text{Total amount of tender} / \text{duration}) / \text{Total operating income}$$

This ratio measures the weight between the annual value of the tender and the annual turnover of the tenderer.

4.2. Analysis of the results

The points awarded on the basis of the calculated value of each ratio range between 0 and 2. Adding the points awarded for each of the financial years analysed results in a three-level classification of financial capacity: INSUFFICIENT, SATISFACTORY and GOOD.

Where ratios are insufficient, an in-depth financial analysis will be performed. The following ratios will be used:

- for economic operators keeping a complete set of accounts:

Ratio	Formula
"Trade receivables" turnaround time	=Clients/turnover*360
"Supplier credit" turnaround time	=Suppliers/net purchases*360
Working capital	=Permanent capital-net fixed assets
Working capital requirements	=Current assets (non-financial)-current liabilities (non-financial)

$$\text{Trade receivables turnaround time} = \text{clients} / \text{turnover} * 360$$

This is a financial ratio which indicates the speed at which a company covers its trade receivables. In other words, it expresses in number of days the average credit which a company grants to its clients (or the average time it takes for them to pay).

$$\text{Supplier credit turnaround time} = \text{suppliers} / \text{net purchases} * 360$$

This ratio can be used to measure the degree of payability of supplier debts. It expresses in numbers of days the average payment periods granted by the suppliers of the entity.

The trade receivables turnover time must be shorter than the supplier credit turnover time in order to avoid any deficit in financial resources and therefore inability to pay.

$$\text{Working capital} = \text{permanent capital} - \text{net fixed assets}$$

Working capital is the part of permanent capital (own funds, provisions for risks and charges and debts due in over one year) which exceeds the amount of intangible assets. The working capital will be used to finance the operating cycle of the economic operator.

It should cover the vast majority of working capital requirements. Working capital thus prevents the entity from having to rely more heavily on short-term banking finance which can generate substantial financial charges.

Working capital requirements = current assets (non-financial)-current liabilities (non-financial)

Working capital requirements (WCR) represent the funding discrepancy stemming from the daily business of the entity (the undertaking).

Working capital in excess of working capital requirements is a positive situation in which financial balance is achieved.

- for economic operators keeping a simplified set of accounts:

Ratio	Formula
Own funds (net assets)	=Assets-liabilities
Cash flow	=Revenue-expenditure

Own funds (net assets) = assets-liabilities

Own funds are the difference between total assets and liabilities. Positive net assets are essential to ensure a certain level of growth.

Cash flow = revenue-expenditure

Cash flow measures the flows of liquidity which the entity generates from its activities, and must be positive.

Following this tin-depth analysis, the results will be classified into two categories:

- "unfavourable": if the cumulative results at the time of the in-depth analysis appear to be unfavourable, a decision is made to exclude the economic operator;
- "favourable": results which appear to be favourable could lead to the authorising officer responsible deciding to retain the economic operator while providing for safeguard measures.

4.3.Assessment of the financial situation of the special cases provided for in point 3.4, "Exceptional cases referred to in point 19.3 paragraph 2 of Annex 1 to FR"

For the exceptional cases provided for in point 3.4, the economic operators concerned are authorised to prove their economic and financial capacity by any means considered appropriate. These documents will be analysed on a case-by-case basis in order to determine whether the economic and financial capacity is assured.

4.4. Assessment of the financial situation of the special cases provided for in point 3.5, 'Special cases'

Recently established entities

The analysis is carried out on the basis of the documents referred to in point 3.5 above.

Recent acquisition, merger and incorporation

The analysis is carried out for each operator involved in these incorporation, acquisition and merger operations on the basis of the documents required in accordance with the scenarios set out in point 3.

Consortia and subcontractors

For consortia, the analysis is carried out for the leader and all the members of the consortium on the basis of the documents required in accordance with the scenarios set out in point 3.

In the case of sub-contracting, the analysis is carried out for all sub-contractors for which the sub-contracting value is 10 % or more of the value of the contract on the basis of the documents required in accordance with the scenarios set out in point 3.

If analysis of the financial capacity reveals that one or more members of the consortium/one or more sub-contractors do not have the financial capacity to perform the contract, the authorising officer may decide to apply the following approaches:

- reject the member(s)/sub-contractor(s) in question and continue with the other members/sub-contractors of the group. In this case they must prove that they have the financial and operational capacity to perform the contract. Furthermore, the change in the composition of the group may not substantially change the tender;
- require that the member(s)/sub-contractor(s) in question be replaced by another entity/other entities which are able to provide the same services while fulfilling the following conditions:
 - the new candidate is not excluded (a statement of non-exclusion will be required);
 - the new candidate still meets the selection criteria with respect to the request to participate/tender originally submitted;
 - the change in the composition of the group does not require a substantial change to the tender. This condition is met if:
 - all the tasks assigned to the former member/sub-contractor are taken over by the new entity;
 - the change does not make the tender non-compliant with the specifications;

- the change does not amend the assessment of the tender originally submitted according to the award criteria.

It should be noted that there may be a combination of all the hypothetical cases covered by this methodology.

In all cases included in the methodology, the authorising officer reserves the right to use the joint and several liability clause in the contract.

Annex 7b. Economic and financial analysis

(See a separate Excel file to be completed and signed by the tenderer)

Annex 8. Letter of intent

LETTER OF INTENT FOR EXTERNAL EXPERTS

Call for tenders EAC/2020/OP/0004

"European Expert Network on Economics of Education"

The undersigned:

Address:

Declares hereby that, in case the contract is awarded to

She/he intends to collaborate in an individual capacity as member of the European Expert Network on Economics of Education on the execution of tasks subject of this call for tenders, in accordance with the tender specifications and the tender to which the present form is annexed and is available to carry out her/his part of tasks during the execution period of the contract. In addition, the undersigned declares not to have any conflict of interest in connection with the contract.

Place and date:

Name (typewritten or handwritten in block characters) and signature: