

## TENDER SPECIFICATIONS

**Reference:** OC/EFSA/COM/2020/01

**Subject:** Publishing of the EFSA Journal and related services: provision of a comprehensive publishing service for EFSA's scientific advice

**Procurement procedure:** Open call (Article 164(1) (a) of the Financial Regulation)

**Project/Process code:** COMMS-26

**Budget Line:** 3410

### Tender specifications purpose:

1. specify what EFSA will buy under the contract resulting from this procurement procedure;
2. announce the criteria which EFSA will use to identify the successful contractor;
3. guide tenderers in the preparation and sending of their offer;
4. form Annex 1 of the contract resulting from this procurement procedure and be binding for contract implementation.

### Additional guidance:

Please read the [EFSA Guidance for tenderers](#) available on the EFSA website, designed to assist potential tenderers in their understanding of EFSA procurement procedures.

### Provide EFSA with feedback:

If you considered applying to this call for tenders but finally decided not to, please provide [EFSAProcurement@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:EFSAProcurement@efsa.europa.eu) with your feedback on the call and reasons for not applying. Feedback will be treated confidentially and will only be used for improving future EFSA procurement calls.



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## **PART 1 TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS - WHAT DOES EFSA NEED TO BUY THROUGH THIS PROCUREMENT PROCEDURE?**

### **1.1 INDICATIVE PROCEDURE TIMETABLE**

| <b>Milestone</b>  | <b>Date<sup>1</sup></b>    | <b>Comments</b>   |
|---|----------------------------|---|
| Launch date   | 14/12/2020                 | Date of publication being sent to OJ  |
| Deadline for sending a request for clarification to EFSA    | 01/02/2021                 |   |
| Deadline for EFSA to respond to a request for clarification | 03/02/2021                 |   |
| Deadline for submission of offers                           | <b>08/02/2021 at 14:30</b> | See details in the Invitation letter <sup>2</sup> .   |
| Opening session   | 09/02/2021 at 14:30        | Requests to attend the virtual opening session must be made 2 working days in advance of the opening session. Refer to Invitation letter for details  |
| Notification of the evaluation results                      | March 2021                 | Estimated. <i>Attention: the outcome of the present procurement procedure will be communicated to all tenderers via the e-mail address indicated in their offer. Accordingly, tenderers who have submitted offers under the present call are strongly advised to check regularly the inbox in question.</i> |
| Contract signature  | March 2021                 | Estimated   |

<sup>1</sup> All times are in the time zone of the country in which EFSA is located.

<sup>2</sup> If you decide to submit an offer, in addition to following the instructions for offer submission set out in the invitation letter, please send a **separate email** to [EFSAProcurement@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:EFSAProcurement@efsa.europa.eu) indicating that you have submitted an offer. Do not attach the offer to this separate email. The purpose of this **separate e-mail** is to ensure that we are aware an offer has been submitted.



# TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

## 1.2 BACKGROUND

### 1.2.1 European Food Safety Authority

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is the official European Union risk assessment body for food and feed safety. Funded from the central EU budget, the work of the Authority falls into two areas: risk assessment and risk communication.

**Risk assessment:** EFSA's Scientific Committee, its Expert Panels and other scientific expert groups provide risk assessments on all matters linked to food and feed safety, farm to fork. EFSA's Expert Panels provide the European Commission, the European Parliament and Member States with a robust evidence base for legislation and policies related to food and feed safety.

**Risk communication:** EFSA is committed to ensuring that all interested parties and the public at large receive timely, reliable, objective and meaningful information based on the risk assessments and scientific expertise of its Scientific Committee and Panels. Communicating its own initiatives and ensuring collaboration and coherence across the Member States are crucial to maintaining consumer confidence in the risk assessment process.

The detailed remit of EFSA can be found in the founding **Regulation EC N° 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002**<sup>3</sup> and its revision **Regulation (EU) 2019/1381 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019**<sup>4</sup> laying down the general principles of food law and procedures in matters of food and feed safety.

#### Overview of EFSA requirements

EFSA is seeking a full-service provider with verifiable expertise in journal publishing and a state-of-the-art platform with open access functionality. Preference will be given to tenderers with an existing journal list in the field of food science/food safety, efficient production tools and services who can demonstrate a commitment to innovation and can support EFSA's reputation in open and inclusive scientific assessment. Tenderers should demonstrate robust business continuity to deal with crises such as the current pandemic and should be members of, or subscribe to the principles of, the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE, <https://publicationethics.org/>). Tenderers will be expected to provide effective technical support for EFSA staff particularly during the set-up phase (see section 1.3.4). As EFSA data are confidential until published, tenderers must demonstrate robust information security at all stages of the publication process.

<sup>3</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32002R0178>

<sup>4</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32019R1381&rid=3>



### 1.2.2 EFSA Journal & EFSA Supporting Publications

The *EFSA Journal* (ISSN: 1831-4732) is an open-access, online scientific journal that is the single repository and unique access point for the scientific outputs of EFSA. These outputs are devoted to the field of risk assessment in relation to food and feed. Due to the central role that EFSA plays in protecting public health, the Authority is obliged to make its scientific advice publicly available as quickly as possible. Therefore, **speed of publication** is a key consideration for the organisation. Furthermore, EFSA is firmly committed to **openness and transparency in risk assessment** and **engaging** with its stakeholders, including the public, in a meaningful manner.

At present, the *EFSA Journal* neither accepts nor commissions third party content. For each scientific output published in the journal a stringent process is in place to ensure the scientific advice reflects the most robust and current science: more than 20 independent experts are involved from disciplines relevant to the topic, e.g. toxicologists, nutritionists, chemists, statisticians and veterinarians. EFSA's scientific outputs are typically drafted by Working Groups and staff members and are reviewed by the Scientific Panels as part of the adoption process. An Editorial Advisory Board (EAB) guides the journal's development: its members, experts in the area of food and feed safety, are appointed by EFSA for a three-year term. The EAB is chaired by the Chair of the EFSA Scientific Committee.

In addition to its scientific outputs, EFSA publishes a range of ancillary supporting publications that inform the Authority's scientific assessments or report on scientific events. These are published, mainly as PDFs (along with metadata and abstracts in HTML on the article landing page) in a separate channel: *EFSA Supporting Publications* (ISSN: 2397-8325). Like the *EFSA Journal*, *EFSA Supporting Publications* does not accept any third party articles other than the outputs of its procured scientific tasks.

Since 2016, the *EFSA Journal* and *EFSA Supporting Publications* have been published by John Wiley & Sons on behalf of EFSA. EFSA has a small, centralised Editorial Office which coordinates publication and ancillary activities, manages the EAB, sets editorial policies and provides strategic direction for development of EFSA's publishing activities. It serves as the main contact point with the publisher.

All articles are published under a CC BY-ND license.

#### Overview of EFSA content

All articles are published in English. Each article carries a unique reference number and a Digital Object Identifier (DOI). Six types of scientific output are currently published in the *EFSA Journal*: Scientific Opinions, Statements, Guidance Documents, Conclusions, Reasoned Opinions and Scientific Reports. Supporting publications include Technical Reports, Event Reports and procured Scientific Reports from European food safety institutions.

#### Key facts and figures:

- ca. 500 outputs are published annually in the *EFSA Journal* along with 150 *EFSA Supporting Publications* annually
- monthly manuscript flow is variable depending on the number of mandates received from the European institutions and EU Member States



- average article length is ca. 35 pages but with wide variation (up to 500 pages)
- the outputs contain a significant amount of tabular content with some graphics and maths/chemistry mark-up
- the current backfile comprises ca. 650 outputs in the *EFSA Journal* and ca. 2000 in *EFSA Supporting Publications*
- A significant proportion (ca.10-15%) of EFSA articles are republished to comply with relevant EU legislation on confidentiality or update existing knowledge

**Further information:** <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/>

### **Editorial policy and control**

EFSA will retain full editorial control of its scientific outputs and will retain responsibility for journal policy and the appointment of the Editorial Advisory Board. However, the successful contractor will be asked to advise EFSA on publishing-related issues.

### **Strategic direction**

#### *Organisational*

The enactment of Regulation (EU) 2019/1381 (the so-called “Transparency Regulation”) in June 2019 strengthens EFSA’s commitment to transparent scientific assessment and calls on EFSA to *inter alia* establish an effective risk communication network for food safety authorities across the EU. EFSA is currently preparing its strategy to 2027 which will centre on the themes of delivering trustworthy scientific assessments, communication of risks from farm to fork, and building partnerships for the scientific advice of the future. Particular emphasis will be placed on producing clear and accessible communication and exploiting the use of data, particularly big data.

#### *Publishing programme*

The development roadmap of the *EFSA Journal* is predicated on the following organisational priorities.

1. Efficiency gains: through the use of technology, automation, artificial intelligence, smart workflow design and automation, and innovative solutions
2. Increasing impact among the scientific community
3. Understanding audience behaviours: use of advanced metrics and analytics
4. Outreach to stakeholders including the general public
5. Content quality: improve the accessibility of EFSA’s outputs through initiatives to improve presentation and readability
6. Interoperability: support process automation and data interchange with other operators in the food safety domain
7. Commitment to open science/open data: in particular with respect to the FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) principles and other initiatives to optimise the reproducibility of EFSA’s scientific assessments



### 1.2.3 Current editorial workflow

#### Basic workflow

A schematic illustration of a typical workflow for the *EFSA Journal* is provided in Figure 1. It starts with a request for advice from the European Commission, European Parliament or EU Member State, following which a draft scientific opinion is produced by a working group established by one of EFSA's 10 scientific panels, supported by the relevant EFSA scientific unit(s). These draft opinions are reviewed and formally adopted by the Scientific Panel and then published in the *EFSA Journal*. The deadline for publication of an opinion is set by EFSA at 28 working days after adoption. Retaining the accuracy and precise meaning of the text adopted by the Scientific Panels is critical and hence substantive changes to the content of outputs may not be possible or may be highly restricted after adoption.

Supporting publications are published as PDFs + metadata, created from the Word files supplied by EFSA and are typically published 2-3 days after approval by EFSA.

If requested, it is expected that the workflow can be customised, automated and integrated with EFSA's IT infrastructure and business process solutions. An outline of EFSA's integration strategy is provided in Annex 4.

#### Editorial guidelines

EFSA follows a standard scientific publications style guide, however as it is an EU agency, it is also obliged to apply the Inter-institutional Style Guide (<http://publications.europa.eu/code/en/en-000100.htm>) to various aspects of its outputs. The ISG (especially Part Four – Publications in English) covers several aspects of the procedures and conventions related to publications produced by the European Institutions including some uniform stylistic rules and conventions. The ISG does not, however, cover scientific conventions comprehensively, hence the need to supplement it with standard scientific publishing conventions.

### 1.2.4 Key usage and impact statistics of the *EFSA Journal*

|                     | 2019   | 2020*  |
|---------------------|--------|--------|
| Downloads           | 2.3 m  | 3.1 m  |
| Impact Factor       | -      | 2.74   |
| H index             | 57     | 110    |
| Timeliness**        | 90%    | 88%    |
| Number of citations | 20,000 | 48,000 |

\* Predicted 2020 outcomes

\*\*Defined as publication in the *EFSA Journal* inside 28 working days after adoption or endorsement by EFSA.



## 1.3 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this procurement procedure is to conclude a framework contract for a maximum of six consecutive years with one contractor. The framework contract will be implemented through specific contracts or order forms. Implementation modalities are detailed under Section 1.5 “Information on the contract”.

### 1.3.1 Overall objective

#### Full service publishing

EFSA requires a comprehensive publishing service for the *EFSA Journal*, to include all the elements necessary to publish the journal online with full open access (as specified below, and including the previously published archive). The services should incorporate the planned and regular technological development of the contractor’s journal platform.

Requirements for publishing the *EFSA Journal* may therefore be broken down into these specific tasks:

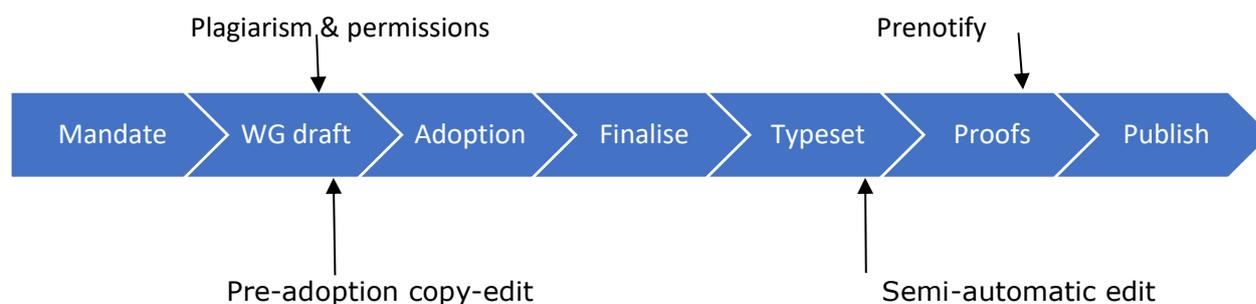
- editorial tasks
- production tasks
- online hosting
- marketing and promotion
- general publishing management (including metrics, reporting and planning).

In addition to the continuing operational requirements, there will also be a need for an initial set-up phase for specification, design and configuration.

**Note:** The working language for contract implementation – execution of tasks, meetings, documents and deliverables – shall be English.

### 1.3.2 Workflow

**Figure 1: Simplified schema of the typical *EFSA Journal* workflow.**





An estimated 25-30% of EFSA outputs, in particular those not restricted by regulatory deadlines, are copy-edited by experienced, mother-tongue English, scientific editors before adoption: this service will be provided by the contractor. This has the advantage of (i) providing a cleaner version for the Panels to adopt and (ii) minimising any editorial requirements after adoption, thereby speeding up the publication process. The pre-adoption edit should normally be completed within 5-10 working days of receipt by the tenderer, depending on the size and complexity of the manuscript. For other urgent documents, quicker turnaround times for the pre-adoption edit will be required, subject to agreement between both parties.

EFSA is seeking to **increase the proportion of its outputs that are copy-edited before their adoption or approval** and tenderers are asked to provide innovative solutions, including the use of appropriate technologies, to achieving this, taking into consideration the limited time available for copy-editing.

Because outputs cannot be changed substantively after adoption or approval, typically only a light style edit (e.g. standardised spelling or terminology, ensuring consistency in headings, abbreviations etc.) is required after adoption. This final quality check is performed as part of the proofing process.

Supporting publications are closely associated with individual scientific outputs and will be published as PDF files (along with HTML abstract and metadata on the article landing page). Some will require copy-editing or formatting into the EFSA style before publication. The latter will be decided on a case-by-case basis and on agreement between EFSA and the contractor. Some supporting publications will require linkage with the related scientific outputs published in the *EFSA Journal*. They should be **published simultaneously with the relevant scientific output**; supporting publications should be available on the platform typically **within 2 days of receipt by the contractor**.

### Rapid response

In some cases faster publication may be required to meet external deadlines set by the European Commission or Member States. EFSA is asked to respond rapidly to a limited number (typically 3-5) of urgent food safety issues every year with relatively short scientific statements or opinions (by way of example see: <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.2903/j.efsa.2019.5615>). These will require prompt publication, initially as PDFs + metadata, usually within 48 hours.

## 1.3.3. Specific objective 1: Editorial services

### Copy-editing standards

As indicated in the workflow schema (Figure 1), EFSA outputs require two types of editing: (a) copy-editing before adoption and (b) a semi-automated, machine edit as part of the proofing quality assurance process. As with any journal, the quality of language in EFSA manuscripts varies depending on the authors, bearing in mind that many EFSA experts are working outside their mother tongues. Depending on the quality of the authors' manuscript, the pre-adoption edit (type a) may require no more than a light technical edit (i.e. to ensure compliance with standards of nomenclature, terminology, units). Other manuscripts will require a higher level of editing, i.e. as previously, plus a more substantive technical edit and language edit (i.e. to ensure that the English is of a high standard and accurate by correcting grammar, checking for sense, structure, internal consistency etc.).



Management of references represents a considerable burden to EFSA staff and tenderers are asked to describe how they would support EFSA in reducing that burden e.g. by auto-formatting references into the *EFSA Journal* style, identifying missing references or citations, and resolving reference queries in proofs independently.

The contractor will also be required to provide a formatting service i.e. format Word documents into the EFSA style in preparation for publication as PDF.

### Plagiarism checking

Plagiarism checks are currently undertaken by the EFSA Editorial Office before their adoption by the Scientific Panels using the CrossCheck (iThenticate) platform. The contractor will be required to perform plagiarism checks for all EFSA outputs and to design a workflow that would draw the attention of the EFSA Editorial Office to any concerns in individual manuscripts and facilitate decision making e.g. by the provision of summary reports highlighting any problematic content.

### Assignment and deposit of DOIs

The contractor will be responsible for the registration of digital object identifiers (DOIs) in collaboration with the Publication Office of the European Union, which is a member of CrossRef. The existing EFSA DOI structure will be retained.

### Tasks and deliverables Objective 1

| Task  | Subcontracting allowed | Deliverables  | Deadline  |
|---|------------------------|---|---|
| a. In agreement with EFSA, establish a set of editorial and online publication standards that meet EFSA's requirements with regards to editorial quality, timeliness, dissemination, and open data.   | Yes                    | <b>Document 1:</b> describing the editorial and online publication standards agreed with EFSA | 4 weeks after the kick-off meeting                                |
| b. <u>Start-up phase</u> of provision of editorial services, involving a pilot phase covering all aspects of the editing and publication of a limited number of EFSA scientific outputs, with intensive guidance and feedback from EFSA. Editorial services must be fully operational before the go-live date of 15 September 2021. | Yes                    | Successful implementation of the start-up phase.  | A 6-week pilot phase beginning 6 weeks after the kick-off meeting |
| c. <u>Continuous phase</u> provision of editorial services (including   | Yes                    | Completion of the editorial work and  | As per specified  |



|  |  |   |                                    |
|--|--|---|------------------------------------|
| all elements described above) to a level necessary to achieve a high published quality and effective dissemination on a per-output basis |  | return to EFSA to meet the agreed deadlines and quality criteria. | deadlines unless agreed otherwise. |
|--|--|---|------------------------------------|

### 1.3.4. Specific objective 2: Production services

The main requirements for typesetting<sup>5</sup>, copy-editing and production of EFSA outputs are:

- *Typesetting*: ability to handle variable levels of copy flow, from under 1000 up to approximately 4000 pages per month
- *Copy-editing*: ability to copy-edit up to 1000 pages per month, depending on the workflows agreed and EFSA priorities
- *XML generation*: conversion of documents in Microsoft Word format to full-text XML (JATS/NLM DTD), HTML and PDF following the layout agreed with EFSA; reformatting of tables and redrawing of graphics where required (by agreement); supply of tracked-change proofs to EFSA for checking
- *File delivery*: supply of full-text files (packaged as necessary) to publisher’s online platform; supply of full-text files (XML) to EFSA for storage in its internal archives and reuse in other EFSA applications

#### Typesetting

Scientific outputs will be provided by EFSA to typesetters mainly as Microsoft Office files (text in Word, tables in Excel), using a simple journal template that has been designed to both facilitate publisher requirements and minimise author time spent on formatting of text.

Typesetters will be required to convert the files into full-text XML and PDF files for online publication. The layout of the final document will be agreed with EFSA. XML should conform to the current JATS/NLM DTD.

Graphics and tables developed by EFSA may need to be redrawn or relabelled by a typesetter. Where the publisher identifies such a requirement, this should be agreed with EFSA if this would incur additional charges.

In addition to supplying the necessary files to the publisher’s online platform, XML files must be supplied to EFSA for storage and for reuse in its other applications.

Typesetting and proofing must be completed for all outputs within 11 working days and the article published within 48 hours for all outputs; exceptions are made for very large or complex manuscripts. **Tenderers should indicate how they can meet or if possible improve on those lead-in times.**

<sup>5</sup> Defined as the conversion of Word document to JATS XML according to EFSA’s standardised typographic style.



### Proof-checking

A proof-checking step will be built into the process, allowing EFSA staff to review proofs of the outputs before publication. A practical system for showing tracked changes will be required. A browser-based proofing system enabling EFSA authors to directly mark their changes to a manuscript is preferable but PDF-based systems will be considered.

### Supplementary materials

The production workflow must include provision for handling of supplementary materials (e.g. data or other file types).

### Redaction

Confidential or otherwise sensitive information may need to be redacted (blackened) in a number of EFSA outputs when first published and later republished when the confidentiality issues are resolved. The contractor must be able to demonstrate a reliable workflow and methodology to achieve this redaction and republication process.

### Tasks and deliverables Objective 2

| Task  | Subcontracting allowed                                   | Deliverables   | Deadline   |
|---|--|--|--|
| <u>Set-up phase</u><br>a. Devise workflows and templates for the editorial style, editing, typesetting and online publication/republication of EFSA's scientific outputs  | Yes  | <b>Document 2:</b> that describes in detail the workflows described in Specific Objective 2. The document should include appropriate graphics to illustrate the workflows. | 3 weeks after kick-off meeting   |
| b. Load <i>EFSA Journal</i> backfile (ca. 6500 documents) and supporting publications (ca. 2000 documents) to the publisher's journal platform in time for a go-live date of 15 September 2021. The publisher's journal platform or that of any subcontractor shall be in servers or data centres located in the territory of the European Economic Area (EEA = EU) | Yes, provided storage location is located within the EEA | Set-up phase completed including loading of current outputs and backfile completed   | Starting 6 weeks after kick-off meeting and in sufficient time to facilitate testing and verification for a go-live date of 15 September 2021. |



|  |     |   |   |
|--|-----|---|---|
| countries + Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway) + Switzerland, including for back-up storage   |     |   |   |
| <u>Continuous phase</u><br>c. Ongoing provision of production services (including all elements described above) to a level necessary to achieve the specified quality and timeliness targets | Yes | Outputs published in <i>EFSA Journal</i> within the agreed deadlines and effectively disseminated | As per specified deadlines unless agreed otherwise. |

### 1.3.5. Specific objective 3: Online hosting/publishing

The contractor will be required to host on its platform: all *EFSA Journal* and *EFSA Supporting Publications* article files, ongoing (ca. 500 and 150 articles per annum, respectively) as well as the pre-published backfile (ca. 6500 and 2000 articles, respectively); plain language summaries (see p. 14); "About the journal" information including information on editorial policy, Editorial Advisory Board etc. The contractor will be required to provide effective technical support and customisation to connect with EFSA's IT architecture where relevant and requested. This will include the creation of dynamic or static links from the platform to other EFSA corporate channels and specific article-related content.

#### Minimum platform specification

The online journal hosting platform must offer these core services:

- open access functionality
- journal pages: a branded EFSA landing page/portal, editable information pages, links to EFSA corporate channels, tables of content arranged by volume, issue, ability to handle special issues and subject collections
- thematic issues: as well as the standard monthly issues, the contractor must provide the ability to create thematic issues on subjects selected by EFSA
- XML workflows: XML delivery to third parties; metadata delivery to abstracting and indexing services and others, SRU/W search/retrieve web service, registration of DOIs with CrossRef via the EU Publications Office
- formats: XML, HTML and PDF formats
- journal backfile: the backfile of published outputs and all related supplementary materials must as a minimum be loaded in the current format
- continuous development roadmap for the publisher's platform as a whole, creating new features and capabilities. The *EFSA Journal* and *EFSA Supporting Publications* would benefit automatically from such features. Introduction of substantive new features for EFSA content would normally be by consultation and agreement with EFSA. The publisher must budget for any costs of such normal development, including any necessary journal-level configuration and adaptations as part of the standard charges



- search and discovery tools: native search (basic/advanced options), related content services. Both the *EFSA Journal* and *EFSA Supporting Publications* must be indexed and co-searchable.
- intuitive navigation and logical classification of articles: ability to “drill down” to relevant articles or topics
- current awareness tools and social bookmarking: email alerts, RSS feeds, search alerts, ability to share outputs in social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Google+, etc. and specialist researcher services such as Mendeley; and to bookmark outputs in social bookmarking services like CiteULike, Del.icio.us etc.
- reference linking and citation tools: linking of references via CrossRef; linking to bibliographic databases such as PubMed, Web of Science, CAS etc.; cited-by links; ability to download citations to the main reference manager software in different formats
- advanced reporting tools and metrics: downloads, total visits and page views; traffic sources, geographic breakdown of usage, breakdowns by type of output; article-level reporting; alternative metrics such as Altmetric, Plum Metrics etc.
- predictable and reliable publication and republication processes: articles available online within 48 hrs of authorisation by EFSA; republications completed within 3 working days; flexibility to manage late changes in content and publication times; ability to manage embargo times accurately
- incremental issue build: outputs must be published online as soon as they are ready
- journal app: available for iOS and android; strategy to increase app usage
- access on mobile devices: content optimised for tablet computers and smart phones
- ability to access and export EFSA content (metadata and data) via Web Services (APIs). APIs should allow external actors to search and extract data (in XML or Json format). Some integration of the platform into EFSA’s IT architecture will be required: this would include responding to events generated on EFSA’s architecture as well as triggering events e.g. when an article is published or re-published. An outline of EFSA’s strategic IT development is described briefly in Annex 4.
- text and data mining (TDM): the platform must support TDM and the contractor must provide technical support.
- platform responsiveness: the contractor’s platform must comply with publishing industry best practices in relation to website load time and page load time with no adverse impact on user experience due to delays in downloads etc.
- platform location: the publisher’s journal platform or that of any subcontractor shall be on servers or in data centres located in the territory of the European Economic Area (EEA = EU countries + Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway) + Switzerland, including for back-up storage

### **Minimum platform performance criteria**

The minimum platform performance criteria are set out in Annex 3; tenderers should note that these criteria shall also be used during the contract implementation as the performance indicators (PIs). The modalities for monitoring and reporting compliance with PIs are set out in section 1.5.



### Specific requirements

In addition to the core features listed above there are a number of specific requirements relating to the *EFSA Journal*:

- branding: the online branding of the journal website must reflect EFSA's independent status, i.e. the primary branding should be EFSA. The publisher or platform brand should be discreet and unobtrusive
- related content linking: the platform must facilitate linking to related content on other EFSA channels or hosted elsewhere, e.g. supplementary documents and/or data repositories
- discoverability: the platform must enhance the visibility and discoverability of the *EFSA Journal* and *EFSA Supporting Publications*, via search engine optimisation, related content features
- advertising: no commercial advertising is permitted on any EFSA web pages, including the publisher's own "house adverts". Advertising tools must be available however for promoting EFSA announcements, calls for expertise, data, services, events, etc.
- article versioning – in addition to standard capabilities for errata and article updates, the platform must support versioning (e.g. via CrossRef or similar) to support the amendment of published outputs

The first two of these requirements – branding and integration with the EFSA website are covered in more detail in the following sections.

### Integration with other EFSA channels

It is important that both journals continue to be linked seamlessly to related content on other EFSA channels, and that this content is easily discoverable from the *EFSA Journal* and *EFSA Supporting Publications*, and vice versa.

### Visual design and branding

The importance of EFSA's scientific independence is both central and critical to its role. It follows that the online branding of the journal website must reflect EFSA's independent status, i.e. the overall branding should be that of EFSA, and it should not appear to be co-branded. The publisher branded elements should therefore be minimal and subsidiary, and discreetly placed (e.g. not appearing higher on the page than EFSA's branding).

Secondly, as discussed in the previous section, EFSA would like the user experience in moving between the *EFSA Journal*, *EFSA Supporting Publications* and other EFSA channels to be as seamless as possible. The visual design of the EFSA pages should therefore reflect that of the EFSA site, as far as this is possible within the constraints of the publisher's platform.

### Versioning

In addition to standard capabilities for errata and other post-publication amendments such as redaction of commercially confidential information, the platform should support versioning to manage the updating or amendment of published outputs. For example, the landing page would always display the most recent version, with earlier versions accessible via a separate tab or other navigational tool. The contractor must therefore provide access



to versioning software in order to facilitate this: this can be either its own proprietary software or commercial packages, for example, CrossMark or equivalent.

### **Integration of plain language summaries**

One of EFSA’s goals is to increase the reach and impact of its outputs among stakeholders and the public at large. One of the strategies it uses to achieve this is the use of plain language summaries (PLS, also known as lay summaries, plain English summaries etc.). EFSA is growing its PLS programme and the contractor will support the programme by for example integrating such summaries into its platform.

### **Ongoing publishing support by the contractor**

The contractor, through regular teleconferences and written contact should support EFSA in the continuous development of the *EFSA Journal* and *EFSA Supporting Publications* in the following ways:

- maintain EFSA’s awareness of the evolving information needs of the scientific community: for example, sharing insights gained from the publisher’s own qualitative or quantitative research, or its publishing experience and daily contacts
- monitor the development of online publishing technologies of interest to EFSA: for example, sharing the platform “roadmap” and anticipated developments; briefing EFSA on relevant new and emerging technologies
- supporting the strategic development of the *EFSA Journal* and *EFSA Supporting Publications*, particularly with respect to the overall strategic objectives

A long-term development plan will be agreed with EFSA, to include annual and longer-term targets in support of the overall goals. The plan will be reviewed and revised at least yearly. The first plan and associated targets will be agreed during the set-up phase.

### **Tasks and deliverables Objective 3**

| <b>Task</b>   | <b>Subcontracting allowed</b>  | <b>Deliverables</b>  | <b>Deadline</b>                           |
|---|--|--|---|
| <u>Set-up phase</u><br>a. Create a full-feature, industry-standard presence for EFSA on the contractor’s online journal publishing platform located in servers or data centres in | Yes, provided the EEA location requirement for servers of data centres is observed | State-of-the-art electronic journal publishing platform and functionality as described | In time for go-live of 15 September 2021. |



|  |     |  |                               |
|--|-----|--|-------------------------------|
| the European Economic Area (EEA = EU countries + Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway) + Switzerland   |     |  |                               |
| b. Development roadmap for the contractor's online journal platform  |     | A development roadmap that describes how the platform will be developed technologically over the duration of the contract                          | End-2021 and updated annually |
| <u>Continuous phase</u><br>c. Ongoing provision of the EFSA presence on the contractor's online journal publishing platform, and provision of an annual platform development roadmap | Yes | As specified above for provision of <i>EFSA Journal</i> and <i>EFSA Supporting Publications</i> presence plus annual platform development roadmap. | Ongoing and annually          |

### 1.3.6. Specific objective 4: Marketing and promotion services

Marketing and promotion services should be provided in support of the journal's goals, in particular to increase the audience, reach, visibility and impact. This should include "passive" marketing, i.e. search engine optimisation and discoverability improvements, as well as more "active" promotion including exposure alongside other related scientific content in the publisher's list, social media, mailing lists etc. in collaboration with the EFSA Communications Unit



#### Tasks and deliverables Objective 4

| Task   | Subcontracting allowed | Deliverables  | Deadline   |
|--|------------------------|---|--|
| <u>Set-up phase</u><br>a. Devise strategy and metrics to enhance the visibility and impact of EFSA scientific outputs                      | Yes                    | <b>Document 3:</b> report that describes the strategy for maximising visibility and impact of EFSA scientific outputs.                        | 8 weeks after the entry into force of the contract |
| <u>Continuous phase</u><br>b. Provision of marketing and promotional services on an ongoing basis in support of the goals described above. | Yes                    | Annual marketing plan and annual update of the marketing strategy.  | Annual and ongoing                                 |
| c. User satisfaction survey  | Yes                    | Implement a biannual satisfaction survey, respecting the relevant data protection legislation of the European Union; present analysis of data | Every 2 years                                      |

### 1.3.7. Specific objective 5: general publishing management (including reporting and planning)

#### Reporting

EFSA requires the following reporting framework. The exact details of what information should be provided in each report would be agreed during the set-up phase.

- *Monthly:* numerical/statistic reports covering web usage statistics (page views, downloads, citations, visits, time spent, with agreed breakdowns); alert registrant numbers; number of app users, basic production statistics (numbers of articles/pages published; production times; article/page counts for production issues - copy-editing, formatting, image redraws, plagiarism checks etc.)
- *Annual:* as for monthly reports, but supported by written commentary where necessary (i.e. variances from targets or plan). Plus: marketing update (campaign results; trends vs. plans; rolling marketing plan); progress against annual targets and long-term development plans; scientific publishing update (overview of trends and developments); bibliometric reports (citation trends;



citing/cited-by reports; more advanced analytics); annual financial statement; quality of service (report on performance against PIs – see section 1.3.5 “minimum platform performance criteria” and Annex 3)

### Tasks and deliverables Objective 5

| Task   | Subcontracting allowed | Deliverables   | Deadline                                       |
|--|------------------------|--|--|
| <u>Set-up phase</u><br>a. Draft first annual strategic journal development roadmap and reporting plan agreed with EFSA | Yes                    | <b>Document 4:</b> First annual journal strategic development roadmap and reporting plan | 8 weeks after entry into force of the contract |
| <u>Continuous phase</u><br>b. Provision of strategic journal development map and reports                               | Yes                    | Annual journal development roadmap and regular reports as described above                | As specified above unless agreed otherwise     |

### 1.3.8. Specific objective 6: *ad hoc* services and consultancy

Over the course of the framework contract, EFSA may require the contractor to provide additional *ad hoc* consultancy or services over and above that foreseen in the specific objectives and tasks set out above. These might range from IT or editorial services to addition of other content types or channels.

*Ad hoc* consultancy or services would be requested using specific contracts / order forms setting out the detailed nature of the *ad hoc* consultancy required and will follow one of the implementation modalities described in section 1.5 below. *Ad hoc* consultancy or services may be requested in relation to the subject matter of this framework contract from the contractor’s account manager or IT project manager.



## 1.4 MEETINGS

| No. | Meetings  | Deadline for finalisation  |
|-----|---|--|
| 1   | <p><b>Kick off meeting</b> (physical meeting in Parma - one day<sup>6</sup>)</p> <p>To be attended by the contractor’s account manager and other relevant staff from the project team. The purpose of the kick-off meeting is to verify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the contractor’s understanding of the terms of reference, timelines and structure of the various deliverables;</li> <li>- the proposed approach and methodology;</li> <li>- agree principles of first journal development plan</li> </ul>   | 2 weeks after the entry into force of the contract                                 |
| 2   | <p><b>Technical meeting</b> between IT staff of the contractor and EFSA (physical meeting in Parma - one day<sup>7</sup>)</p> <p>To be attended by the contractor’s Account Manager, contractor’s IT leader and other relevant staff from the project team. The purpose of the technical meeting is to verify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the contractor’s understanding of the technical requirements, timelines and deliverables;</li> <li>- the proposed approach and methodology;</li> <li>- sign off first journal development plan including technical roadmap</li> </ul> | 2 weeks after the kick-off meeting   |
| 3   | <p><b>Teleconferences:</b> to be held as needed throughout the duration of the contract. These will be organised either by EFSA or the contractor. The purpose of the teleconference will be to receive progress reports on the ongoing assignment; it will also pose the opportunity to draw attention to any technical or administrative difficulties encountered in the implementation of the project with discussion and resolution.</p>  | As required  |
| 4   | <p><b>Biannual publishing management meeting:</b> These physical meetings (one day) in Parma will review the half-yearly and annual reports respectively and provide a forum for discussion of the development of the journal and the business relationship. To be attended by the contractor’s Account Manager and/or IT project leader and other relevant staff from the project team as required.</p>  | Biannually - beginning in 2021, schedules to be agreed between EFSA and contractor |
| 5   | <p><b>Ad hoc meetings:</b> for provision of ad hoc consultancy in accordance with specific objective 7, between the contractor’s IT Project Manager and/or account management staff and EFSA staff. Such physical meetings will be held in Parma for either full day or half day duration as needed.</p>  | As required  |

<sup>6</sup> A one-day meeting has a duration of 8 hours and a half-day meeting is 4 hours. If the COVID 19 situation has not resolved sufficiently to allow physical meetings, virtual meetings will be held.



## 1.5 INFORMATION ON THE CONTRACT

**Type of contract:** Framework contract (FWC).

**Type of FWC:** Single FWC

A single framework contract is a contract concluded with only one economic operator detailing the basic terms for the series of specific contracts / order forms to be concluded over a given period, particularly regarding the duration, subject, price and implementation modalities.

**Nature of expense:** Services

**Duration of FWC:** Six (6) years: 5 years automatic yearly renewal.

**Budget information:** The financial ceiling available for specific contracts/order forms under the framework contract during an overall maximum period of 6 consecutive years is 4.8 million €. A contingency of 10% and possible price indexations are already included in this ceiling.

For further information on the implementation of the FWC please refer to the [EFSA Guidance for tenderers](#) available at EFSA website.

### **Implementation modalities:**

#### **a. PROVISION OF SERVICES ON A TIME AND MEANS BASIS:**

Ordering process:

1. EFSA places the request for services indicating the following:
  - The exact deliverables
  - Number and timing of meetings
  - Milestones and overall maximum duration.
2. The contractor must present offer meeting the above requirements.  
The contractor's financial offer must be based on the (unit) prices agreed in the framework contract.
3. The order form / specific contract will be signed.

#### **b. PROVISION OF SERVICES ON A FIXED PRICE BASIS:**

Ordering process:

1. EFSA places the request for services indicating the following:
  - The exact deliverables
  - Number and timing of meetings
  - Milestones and overall maximum duration.



2. The contractor must present an offer meeting the above requirements and in addition:
  - The contractor's technical offer must include a work organisation plan
  - The contractor's financial offer must be based on the unit prices agreed in the framework contract.
3. The order form or specific contract will be signed based on the agreed fixed price.

### **Implementation modalities for monitoring performance against PIs:**

Failure to comply with the deadlines set out in the PIs during the implementation of the Contract through order forms or specific contracts may result in the application of the following penalties:

- Compliance should be  $\geq 95\%$  of the minimum requirement set out in the PIs. Significant, repeated or prolonged deviation from the PIs may result in penalties or the termination of the contract.

EFSA reserves the right to split pro-rata the cost of all services with a fixed annual fee and may issue an Order Form or a specific contract for a shorter period.

For "production services":

- EFSA will issue an Order Form covering a 12 month period (1st February 2018 until 31st January 2019 and for the remaining duration of the FWC) for the total estimated number of pages required during each 12 month period;
- After 31st October and not later than 15th November of each remaining year of the duration of the FWC, the Contractor should invoice EFSA with details of the actual number of pages processed from 1st February until 31st October (detailed above), plus 50% of the value of the estimated number of pages foreseen to be subject to production services from 1st November 2018 until 31st January 2019 and for the remaining duration of the FWC;
- Payment of the above-mentioned Interim Invoice, defined in Article I.4.4, will be made by the Contracting Authority within 30 calendar days from receipt of the Interim Invoice;
- Not later than 15th February of each remaining year for the duration of the FWC, the Contractor should issue an invoice for payment of the balance. That invoice should contain details of the actual number of pages processed from 1st November until 31st January for each applicable year covered under the FWC, minus the 50% interim payment included in Interim Invoice

## **1.6 OWNERSHIP AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS**

### **Intellectual property on EFSA content:**

EFSA has the intellectual property rights in the *EFSA Journal* and *EFSA Supporting Publications* including copyright in the name, the Journal contents individually<sup>7</sup> and as a

<sup>7</sup> For individual content items in the *EFSA Journal* and *EFSA Supporting Publications*, EFSA may exceptionally merely hold the copyright, the full intellectual property being vested in a third-



collection, and all related materials (e.g. marketing materials or information pages); database rights; trademarks etc.

Copyright in all outputs published in the *EFSA Journal* and *EFSA Supporting Publications* is retained by EFSA: a CC-BY ND license applies.

### **Intellectual property on deliverables commissioned from the publisher/contractor:**

EFSA will be the owner of all commissioned materials and deliverables created by the contractor for the purpose of the contract, in principle extending to the source codes of electronic applications, models or templates developed exclusively for EFSA. EFSA will thus have the intellectual property in all content as well as the electronic files themselves.

The publisher/contractor (or its third-party suppliers) will retain exclusive property of the existing technology and software related to its online publishing platform and connected services (e.g. production workflow tools etc.).

In case the deliverables will not be fully created for the purpose of the contract, the tenderer should clearly point this out in its tender. The tender should contain information about the scope of the publisher's pre-existing materials, their source and when and how the rights to these materials have been or will be acquired.

EFSA does not acquire ownership or any license of pre-existing rights not incorporated in the deliverables. EFSA's full ownership is limited to the deliverables, which might include licensed pre-existing rights on excerpts, parts, texts etc., if fully or partially incorporated in the final deliverables.

Furthermore, the publisher/contractor selected as a result of the present procurement procedure shall verify whether the terms and conditions asserted by any third party copyright holder of publications or information referred to in the deliverables for EFSA are fully satisfied and likewise keep EFSA informed.

The draft contract attached in **Annex 2** contains further provisions on ownership of intellectual property rights.

Finally it should be mentioned that all quotations or information the tenderer provides in their offer for EFSA (technical and financial offer) which originates from other sources to which third parties may claim rights, have to be clearly marked as such, in a way allowing easy identification (source publications, including date & place, creator, number, full title etc.).

## **1.7 REQUIREMENTS CONCERNING DATA PROTECTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

### **1.7.1. Personal data protection**

General information on the protection of personal data is provided in the General Guidance on EFSA Procurements available on the EFSA website.

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party, as may be the case for supporting publications such as technical reports and external scientific reports.



In addition and particularly related to the services under the present contract, the following should be specified: Information in the form of the details of people registered to receive electronic table of content alerts will be passed to the publisher at the start of the contract, and the publisher will manage these lists (i.e. adding to and removing people). There may also be new lists or services requiring personal information created during the contract (e.g. new alerting services; personalisation). In all cases it is important that appropriate consents are obtained to ensure compliance with data protection rules, and in particular the publisher must obtain necessary consents to allow the lists to be returned to EFSA either at the end of the contract or on demand.

### 1.7.2. General requirements

The general requirements regarding the processing of personal data are laid down in Article II.9 of the General Conditions of the Framework Contract (Annex 2). This contract provision refers to the following points:

- the application of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 and its principles laid down in Article 4.1 thereof, including the principles of purpose limitation and data minimisation, the right of access and rectification of data subjects, the right of recourse to the EDPS.
- the conditions for processing of personal data in the execution of the contract, including the obligation for the Contractor only to act on the instruction of EFSA as the data controller, the conditions for processing of personal data by subcontractors, the obligation for the Contractor to adopt technical and organisational security measures with regards to the risks inherent with the treatment and nature of the personal data.

Further information on the processing of personal data in the context of procurement procedures of EFSA is available in the [Privacy Statement](#) on the EFSA website.

Personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) if you are in one of the situations mentioned in Article 136 of the Financial Regulation. For more information see the Privacy Statement at [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect\\_en.cfm#BDCE](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm#BDCE).

### 1.7.3. Further requirements for the use of applications and online tools

Any technical solution proposed by the Contractor to deliver services including the journal publishing platform must guarantee maximum reliability and very tight deploy and restore times and shall comply with the following:

- **Territoriality of datacentres:** any personal data in EFSA content managed under the contract may only be stored in systems or subsystems (including back-up storage) using datacentres or similar premises, located on the territory of the European Economic Area (EEA = EU countries + Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway) + Switzerland. The Contractor must inform EFSA by means of a list of all locations where EFSA data will be stored and processed as well as the interconnections. Every



additional data storage and/or treatment location within the EEA envisaged during the period of implementation of the contract, must be communicated in advance to EFSA.

- **Data transfers outside EEA:** without prejudice to the territoriality requirement, any transfer of personal data under the contract to third countries shall fully comply with the requirements laid down in Chapter V, articles 46-51 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725.
- **Audits:** EFSA shall be allowed to carry out audits or to request that such audits are carried out by a third party to ascertain that the system and all subsystems have the necessary technical and organisational measures in place and fulfil the control and security standards regarding vulnerability and penetration testing. EFSA has the right to verify or request verification by a third party, at any moment, the storage, location and access rights of its data and the technical environment on which its data is treated.
- **Personal data breaches:** the Contractor has an obligation to inform EFSA, within 48 hours of detection, of any information security incident affecting personal data under the contract ("personal data breach"), indicating which EFSA data was or potentially was accessed/modified/copied/made available to non-authorized persons. The Contractor remains responsible for such personal data breach and is subject to damage repair and penalties except if the origin is due to a fault of EFSA and one or more of its staff. In addition, the Contractor is required to implement appropriate mechanisms to deal promptly and effectively with personal data breaches and security incidents.

## 1.8 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### **Possibility for further negotiation with selected contractor:**

By virtue of article 134(1f) and article 134(3) of the Rules of Application of the Financial Regulation, EFSA reserves the option to launch further negotiated procedures, with the contractor chosen as a result of the present call for tender, for new services consisting in the repetition of similar services during the three years following the signature of the original contract.

### **Handover on termination of contract:**

The contractor shall prepare for and contribute pro-actively to a complete, timely and smooth handover of the services to another contractor or EFSA in case of termination or upon expiry of the contract. During the handover period, the contractor will fully cooperate with EFSA or with the next contractor to achieve the continuation of high standard service quality.

During the handover period the following package of deliverables shall be provided to EFSA **without any additional payment:**

- Handover of the services to EFSA or newly designated contractor;



- Transfer of knowledge to EFSA or newly designated contractor: publisher to supply all electronic files; work in progress; related lists and personalisation features in agreed formats and within the deadlines specified in the contract; adherence to the NISO or UK Serial Group journal transfer code of practice or equivalent<sup>8</sup> desirable;
- Continue its due tasks defined in the Framework Contract for the period stipulated in the contract to ensure continuity of service;
- Prepare and participate in meetings with the newly designated contractor and/or EFSA;
- Assist in the preparation of migration of data, providing backups and archives of all associated information according to the specifications defined by EFSA;
- Any confidential data in physical files (paper or electronic) that have been provided or have otherwise come into its possession during execution of the work.

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<sup>8</sup> For example, see the NISO standard at <https://www.niso.org/standards-committees/transfer>



## **PART 2 EVALUATION - HOW WILL YOUR OFFER BE ASSESSED?**

In case you apply as a group of economic operators in a joint offer or if your offer envisages the use of subcontractors, please refer to the [EFSA Guidance for tenderers](#).

### **2.1 OPENING OFFERS**

The aim of the public opening session is to check whether the offer received was dispatched by the deadline for tender receipt and that the tenders are electronically protected until the official opening.

### **2.2 ORDER OF EVALUATION**

Tenderers should note that the content of their offers will be assessed in the following pre-defined order: Exclusion criteria (Access to EU Market); Selection criteria (Technical & Professional capacity); Compliance with tender specifications; Award Criteria (Quality and Price).

Following the above assessment and identification of the winning tender, the following will be assessed only for the tenderer proposed for contract award: Selection criteria Professional Conflict of Interest (Institutional and Individual Declarations of Interest); Exclusion criteria (Declaration on Honour on exclusion criteria); Selection criteria (Declaration on Honour on selection criteria); Selection criteria (Economic & Financial capacity).

Evidence under sections 2.3 and 2.4 does not have to be submitted to EFSA if it has already been submitted in response to a previous EFSA call. In such case the evidence must be exactly the same as requested in these tender specifications and not older than 12 months. Please specify the reference of the EFSA call for tenders under which you have already submitted the evidence to EFSA if you chose to rely on such evidence.

### **2.3 GROUNDS FOR EXCLUSION**

#### **Eligibility – access to EU Market**

Only offers from tenderers established in eligible countries will be allowed to the next step of the evaluation. Please refer to the [EFSA Guidance for tenderers](#) for further details.

#### ***Evidence requested in your offer:***

Tenderers must submit the Administrative data forms (including LEF and BAF) available [here](#).

#### **Exclusion**

Tenderers must not be in one of the exclusion situations listed in article 136 of the Financial Regulation, explained in the [EFSA Guidance for tenderers](#).

#### ***Evidence requested in your offer:***

Tenderers must declare that they are not in one of the exclusion situations by providing a signed and dated Declaration on Honour on exclusion criteria, available [here](#). In case of a joint offer from a group of economic operators, or in case of



subcontracting, such declaration should be submitted for each member of the group and for each identified subcontractor.

Further supporting evidence in support of this declaration may be requested from the successful tenderer prior to signature of the contract. Such requested evidence will be specified in the award letter and may have to be provided to EFSA before the contract is signed.

## 2.4 SELECTION CRITERIA

In addition to the evidence requested below, EFSA has the right, during the evaluation process, to request further evidence on the tenderer's compliance with the economic, financial, technical and professional capacity requirements.

### **A) Economic and financial capacity**

The tenderer must have generated an overall annual turnover of at least 1.5 m € in each of the last 3 closed financial years (2019, 2019 and 2020).

#### ***Evidence requested in the offer:***

Tenderers must declare they fulfil the economic and financial capacity by providing a signed and dated Declaration on Honour on selection criteria, available [here](#). In case of a joint offer from a group of economic operators, such declaration should be completed by the leading partner only.

EFSA will request proof of annual turnover from the successful tenderer prior to signature of the contract. Such requested evidence will be specified in the award letter and must be provided to EFSA before the contract is signed. This evidence will be evaluated on a consolidated basis.

During contract implementation, in case of request for the addition of new subcontracting or assignment of the contract to a new legal entity, the economic and financial capacity will be checked for the last 3 most recent closed financial years and not necessarily the financial years published with the call.

### **B) Technical and professional capacity**

The tenderer must have the following **minimum professional capacity** to perform the contract:

1. At least 5 years of demonstrable experience of publishing scientific journals on behalf of learned societies, academic institutions or similar bodies;
2. At least 5 years of demonstrable experience of operating and technically advancing a stable online journal platform in the STM sector with all functionalities outlined in section 1.3.5 of this document;
3. Ability to provide an experienced Account Manager with at least 3 years of broad publisher experience including the delivery of online solutions for clients in the STM publishing sector who will be responsible for all contact with EFSA during the contract implementation;
4. A dedicated professional IT Project Manager to manage the configuration (set-up) operation and ongoing technical needs in collaboration with EFSA staff;



5. Ability to provide a dedicated editorial team of at least 5 persons, each with at least 3 years of experience of working on scientific/technical content in a field of life sciences relevant to EFSA's work (e.g. any of these fields: toxicology, ecotoxicology, environmental sciences, chemistry, biochemistry, food technology, pharmacology, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, human medicine, nutrition, agronomy/agricultural science, statistics, food microbiology, epidemiology or public health). Copy-editors must have an excellent level of spoken and written standard UK English. For non-native speakers, this should be demonstrated by an Official certificate of English proving a C2 level OR at least 3 years of work as an English language editor;
6. Ability to provide marketing and promotion services to increase audience, usage, reach, visibility and impact

The tenderer must have the following **minimum technical capacity** to perform the contract:

7. Editorial capacity to edit, typeset and publish up to 25,000 pages per year in the fields of life sciences relevant to EFSA's work (see 5 above);
8. The technical ability to implement the proposed workflow (see section 1.3.2)
9. The ability and software in order to be able to produce scientific documents (ca. 650 per annum) in HTML, XML, and PDF, and mobile friendly formats;
10. Online journal platform with the features described in section 1.3.5;
11. IT development skills, specifically for integration and event-driven architecture such as RESTful API, JSON, YAMK, XML, XSD, design and integration patterns. No cloud-specific technology is required;
12. Information security: EFSA scientific outputs are confidential prior to publication and may contain commercially sensitive information. To ensure the security of EFSA data, tenderers must have an information security certification issued by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party with a scope that covers their publishing systems. Examples of such standards are ISO 27001:2013 certification and SOC Type II reports. Tenderers must agree to maintain the certification for the duration of the contract.

**Evidence requested:**

In order to demonstrate that the minimum professional and technical capacity requirements are met, the tenderer should provide the following documents:

**Minimum professional capacity**

For requirement 1) a list of at least 2 clients for whom the tenderer has provided similar publishing services during the last 5 years, detailing the publications in question.

For requirement 2) a signed statement indicating when the tenderer's current journal platform was launched and briefly describing its development over the last 5 years.

For requirement 3) the CV of the person proposed as the Account Manager meeting the requirements described in point 3 above.

For requirement 4) the CV of the person proposed as the IT Project Manager meeting the requirements described in point 4 above.



For requirement 5) a signed statement confirming that the tenderer will have at their disposal an editorial team compliant with the specific expertise requirements set out in point 5 above. Individual CVs are not required.

For requirement 6): (i) a signed statement confirming the tenderer's ability to provide the marketing and promotion services requirements described in point 6 above; and (ii) a copy of an annual marketing plan that the contractor has implemented in the past two years for a journal published on behalf of a learned society or similar body, anonymised as the contractor sees fit.

### **Minimum technical capacity**

For requirements 7-11, the tenderer should provide signed statements confirming:

- (i) the approximate number of pages edited, typeset and published by the tenderer per annum is above 25,000 pages
- (ii) the tenderer's technical ability to implement the proposed workflow
- (iii) the tenderer's technical ability to support machine-to-machine integration in the event that EFSA should decide to implement event-driven integration processes,
- (iv) the tenderer's ability and availability of software to produce scientific documents in the formats and quantity described in points 7 and 9 above;
- (v) the tenderer's ability to provide a journal platform which fully meets the technical requirements described in 10 above

For requirement 12, the tenderer should provide:

- (i) a copy of the organisation's information security certification covering their publishing systems,
- (ii) a statement committing to maintaining the certification for the duration of the contract.

- Declaration on Honour on selection criteria** available [here](#). To be signed by the tenderer;
- Confirmatory statement of resources**: a statement signed by each partner/subcontractor confirming they will provide the necessary resources for the performance of the contract;

### **C) Professional conflicting interest**

In accordance with article 167(1)(c) of the Financial Regulation and paragraph 104 of the recitals, if EFSA, based on the assessment of the technical and professional capacity evidence, concludes that the tenderer has a professional conflicting interest and therefore does not possess the professional capacity to perform the contract to an appropriate quality standard, the tenderer may be rejected.

#### ***Evidence requested in the offer:***

The tenderer proposed for contract award will be requested, prior to and as a condition of contract signature, to provide:

***Institutional declaration of interests*** available [here](#) . In case of a group of economic operators and/or in case of subcontracting, such declaration will need to



be completed separately and submitted for each partner and for each identified subcontractor and;

**Individual declarations of interests** available [here](#) for each member of the proposed project team.

Institutional and Individual DoIs do not need to be provided with your offer. The requirement to submit Institutional and Individual DoIs will be specified in the award letter and will have to be provided and assessed by the EFSA Authorising Officer before and as a condition of contract signature. Please refer to [EFSA's policy on independence](#) and the [Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management](#) for detailed information.

With the exception of declarations of interest, evidence must be included in the offer for partners in a joint offer and/or subcontractors only if the capacity of those entities is necessary to satisfy the minimum economic, financial, technical and professional capacity requirements.

If any of the declarations or information provided proves to be false, EFSA 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 EFSA may also refer to publicly available information, in particular evidence that it can access on a national database free of charge.

## 2.5 COMPLIANCE WITH TENDER SPECIFICATION AND MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Your offer will be assessed for compliance with the tender specifications before its assessment against the award criteria.

Tenders do not comply with the tender specifications and will be rejected if they:

- do not comply with minimum requirements laid down in the tender specifications;
- propose a solution different from the one imposed;
- propose a price above the fixed maximum set in the specifications;
- are submitted as variants, when the specifications do not authorise them;
- do not comply with applicable obligations under environmental, social and labour law established by Union law, national law and collective agreements or by the international environmental, social and labour law provisions listed in Annex X to Directive 2014/24/EU<sup>9</sup> and compliance with data protection obligations resulting from Regulation (EU) 2016/679 and Regulation (EU) 2018/1725<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> OJ L 94 of 28.03.2014, p. 65

<sup>10</sup> Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC, OJ L 295/39 21.11.2018, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018R1725&from=EN>



The grounds for rejection is not linked to the award criteria so there is no evaluation. The tenderer will be informed of the grounds for rejection without being given feedback on the content of the tender other than on the non-compliant elements.

## **2.6 AWARD CRITERIA**

Tenders will be evaluated against the below award criteria. The award criteria serve to identify the **most economically advantageous offer**.

### **A) QUALITY AWARD CRITERIA**

The offers compliant with the technical specifications, not falling in one of the grounds for exclusion and complying with the selection criteria will be evaluated against the below defined award criteria. The award criteria serve to identify the **most economically advantageous offer**.

### **A) QUALITY AWARD CRITERIA**

#### **1. MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT THE REQUIRED WORKFLOW AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 1.3.2 AND MEET MINIMUM TARGETS (30 points – minimum threshold 65%)**

The tender should include description in detail how they intend to implement the EFSA Journal workflow and ensure that the minimum deadlines and quality targets set out in Annex 3 are met and/or exceeded. A detailed breakdown should be provided of the tenderer's workflow, giving time in days or hours for each stage. Tenderers should describe how the copy-editing and typesetting services would be provided and managed (e.g. use of in-house staff, freelancers, outside suppliers etc.). Tender should also include a description of the business continuity systems set up to cope with crises such as the current pandemic.

#### **2. MEASURES TO GUARANTEE THE EFFECTIVENESS AND FUNCTIONALITY OF THE JOURNAL PLATFORM (30 points – minimum threshold 65%)**

The tender should include the description on how the platform meets the requirements outlined in 1.3.5. provide an overview of the proposed platform capabilities and a brief outline of planned future developments. The offer should include details on how file size and site usage affect response times and how this will be monitored and managed. It should also include details of the proposed schedules for back-up of content.

Points will be awarded as follows:

- a) The tender offers a full feature, industry standard, state of the art online journal platform which effectively monitors and manages response times and proposes a comprehensive schedule for back-up of content; **15 points**
- b) Clear technical development path for the platform; **5 points**
- c) Effective, well designed and seamless cross-linkage between the platform and the EFSA website; **10 points**

#### **3. MEASURES TO GUARANTEE EFFECTIVE PROJECT ORGANISATION AND DELIVERY (10 points - minimum threshold 50%)**



The tender should provide a detailed description of the proposed organisational structure, on how tasks are intended to be distributed amongst the team members, and on how effective communication with EFSA will be ensured.

Points will be awarded as follows:

- Clear and detailed information on distribution of the tasks among the tenderer's project team including any consortium members or subcontractors and the roles and accountabilities of the Account Manager and IT Project Manager; **5 points**
- Communication with EFSA (who, how, when); **5 points**

#### **4. MEASURES TO GUARANTEE QUALITY OF DELIVERABLES (10 points - minimum threshold 50%)**

The tender should provide a detailed description of the measures in place to ensure the quality of all deliverables including: the editorial and production quality of the EFSA articles; the quality of the EFSA webpages on the journal platform; the linkage to the EFSA corporate website; annual journal plans and platform development roadmaps; strategies to enhance visibility and impact of the *EFSA Journal* and *EFSA Supporting Publications*; and management, reporting and planning.

Points will be awarded as follows:

- a) Clear organisational quality assurance process; **5 points**
- b) Quality standards adopted; **5 points**

#### **5. MEASURES TO GUARANTEE CONTRACTOR FIT WITH EFSA MISSION AND ETHOS, IN PARTICULAR A COMMITMENT TO OPEN SCIENCE AND ACCESSIBILITY TO SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION (5 points - minimum threshold 50%)**

EFSA engages scientists from across the EU and further afield who volunteer their expertise to support EFSA's public health mission. The Authority is firmly committed to openness and transparency in risk assessment. Therefore, the tender should describe in detail its corporate mission, ethos and values and demonstrate its commitment to open access of scientific data and removal of barriers to scientific information for all stakeholders in the scientific research value chain.

A **maximum of 5 points** will be awarded for a convincing description and demonstration of the tenderer's commitment to open access and information accessibility.

#### **6. MEASURES TO GUARANTEE: (a) EFFECTIVE MARKETING AND PROMOTION OF THE EFSA JOURNAL AND EFSA SUPPORTING PUBLICATIONS AND (b) INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT OF BOTH JOURNALS (5 points - minimum threshold 50%)**

The tender should describe the marketing and promotion strategy in order to increase EFSA's visibility and impact among the scientific community.

Points will be awarded as follows:

- a) a clear and compelling marketing and promotion strategy for the EFSA Journal; **5 points**



**7. MEASURES TO GUARANTEE: A CLEAR AND COMPELLING STRATEGIC VISION FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EFSA JOURNAL AND EFSA SUPPORTING PUBLICATIONS (BASED ON THE STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS OUTLINED IN SECTION 1.2.2) AND INCORPORATING A DEMONSTRABLE COMMITMENT TO TECHNICAL INNOVATION (10 points - minimum threshold 50%)**

The tender should describe how the tenderer would support EFSA in developing the EFSA Journal further in terms of editorial quality, efficiency, visibility, impact, and technological development, incorporating of the latest developments in scientific publishing, open data/science and other relevant fields.

Points will be awarded as follows:

- a) a clear and compelling development strategy for the EFSA Journal and EFSA Supporting Publications; **10 points**

**The sum of all quality award criteria gives a maximum possible total of 100 points.**

Tenderers shall elaborate in the technical offer on all points addressed in the technical specifications, bearing also in mind the above indicated award criteria, in order to score as many points against the quality award criteria as possible. The mere repetition of mandatory requirements set out in the technical specifications, without going into detail or without giving any added value in the technical offer, will only result in a very low score.

Offers must score at least 65% for criterion 1 and 2, 50% for criteria 3-7 and at least 75% of maximum possible total points against the quality award criteria overall.

Tenders that do not reach these minimum quality thresholds will be eliminated from the subsequent stages of the evaluation process.

**B) PRICE AWARD CRITERION**

Tenders which passed the quality threshold/s will be further assessed to ensure:

- I. the price offer is made within the stipulated range/maximum budget for financial offers indicated in the tender specifications and;
- II. the financial offer satisfies the formal requirements of the tender specifications.

**C) THE BEST PRICE-QUALITY RATIO**

Tenders for which financial offers were made within the stipulated range/maximum budget and satisfied the formal requirements indicated in the tender specification will be retained for the identification of the tender with the best price-quality ratio based on the following formula:



**TOTAL SCORE OF THE EVALUATED OFFER (C) =**

**30 \* Cheapest price offer/price of tender X**

**+**

**70 \* Total quality score (out of 100) for all quality award criteria of tender  
X/100**



## **PART 3 - HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR OFFER USING e-SUBMISSION**

You must submit your tender electronically via the e-Submission application available from the e-Tendering website before the time limit for receipt of tenders.

The e-Submission application allows economic operators to respond to call for tenders by preparing their tenders electronically in a structured and secured way and submitting their tenders electronically. The e-Tendering is the starting point for launching the e-Submission application.

**Make sure you submit your tender on time: you are advised to start completing your tender early. To avoid any complications with regard to late receipt/non-receipt of tenders within the deadline, please ensure that you submit your tender several hours before the deadline. A tender received after the deadline indicated in the procurement documents will be rejected.**

### **Registration in the Participant Register**

Any economic operator willing to submit a tender 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.

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 [and financial capacity].

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* electronic in no way implies that the tenderer has been successful.**

### **How to Submit your Tender in e-Submission**

You can access the e-Submission application via the corresponding call for tender in TED e-Tendering, as specified in the Invitation Letter.



In order to have access to e-Submission, you will need to "Subscribe to call for tenders" on TED e-Tendering first. To subscribe, you will need to login with your an [EU Login](#)<sup>11</sup>. In case you don't have an [EU Login](#), you can [create an account](#) at any moment. For more information see the [EU login help](#). After logging in with your EU Login password, the e-Tendering will then display a button 'submit your tender' and you will be able to access the e-Submission.

The e-Submission "[quick guide for economic operators](#)" is available after logging in with your EU Login password.

### Information to be filled in

In the e-Submission application, fill in and upload all necessary fields and documents as appropriate. All tenders must be clear, complete and consistent with all the requirements laid down in the tender specifications, including:

- **Signed declaration on Honour on Exclusion criteria.** All members of a joint tender, including subcontractors – if applicable – must upload the signed and dated declaration on honour on exclusion criteria using the template available [here](#).
- **Signed declaration on Honour on Selection criteria.** In case of a joint offer from a group of economic operators, such declaration should be completed by the leading partner using the template available [here](#).
- **Exclusion criteria.** If requested in the tender specifications, the tenderer and all members of a joint tender including subcontractors – if applicable – must provide the documentary evidence for exclusion criteria.
- **Selection criteria.** If requested in the tender specifications, the tenderer and all members of a joint tender including subcontractors – if applicable –, must provide the documentary evidence for selection criteria.
- **Technical tender.** It must address all the requirements laid down in the tender specifications.
- **Financial tender** The complete financial tender, including the breakdown of the price as provided in the tender specifications.

For detailed instructions on how to submit your tender, consult the Quick Reference Guide for Economic Operators where you will find:

- Technical requirements to use e-Submission
- Step-by-step guide to help you submit your tender
- Important advices and information on how to get technical support

***Please make sure all required documents and evidence are submitted with your tender.***

### Documents to be signed and dated while creating your Tender

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<sup>11</sup> Previously called European Commission authentication system (ECAS)



The following documents must be signed and dated during the creation of your tender in e-Submission:

- **Declaration on honour(s).** All members of a joint tender, including subcontractors must sign and date the declaration on Exclusion criteria. Only the leader in a joint tender must sign and date the declaration on Selection criteria. The declaration on honour(s) must be converted to PDF format and then signed by the authorised representatives with advanced electronic signature based on qualified certificates or by hand.
- **Tender Report.** This report is generated by e-Submission while you are completing your tender and it contains the list of documents that you submit. The sole tenderer's or leader's authorised representative(s) must sign the report.

You **must send** the signed Tender Report to the email address indicated in the paragraph below (Contact), stating the reference to the call for tenders and the Tender ID.

### **Re-submission of a tender**

After submitting a tender, but within the time limit for receipt of tenders, you may still submit a new version of your tender. **If you submit a new Tender you must include all your Tender documents, including the Qualification and Tender documents.**

You must formally notify EFSA that the previous tender is withdrawn. The notification letter must be signed by the legal representative who signed the original tender stating the call reference and the Tender ID you wish to withdraw. The notification must be uploaded in e-submission together with the new version of all tender documents. You are kindly requested to also e-mail the notification letter to [EFSAProcurement@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:EFSAProcurement@efsa.europa.eu).

### **Withdrawal of tenders**

If after submitting a tender, you wish to completely withdraw your tender, you must formally notify EFSA that you wish to withdraw your submitted Tender(s) as indicated above.

### **Alternative tender**

You are entitled to send several tenders to one call for tenders.

### **Deadline for receipt of tenders**

The tender (including all documents) must be fully uploaded and received before the deadline for receipt of tenders indicated in the invitation to tender.

Please note that you are responsible to ensure that your full tender reaches the destination in due time.



In case of problems with the submission of the electronic tender, we recommend that you call the helpdesk in reasonable time before the time limit for receipt. The time it takes to submit the tender and upload all your documents may vary considerably depending on the number of concurrent submissions by other economic operators, the size of your tender and the type of internet service you are using. We recommend that you upload the documents the day before the deadline.

If the contracting authority detects technical faults in the functioning of the electronic equipment used for submitting and receiving tenders due to which it is impossible to electronically submit and receive tenders, you will be informed of the extension of the time limit by the contracting authority at the e-Tendering link.

For more information or technical support on e-Submission, please visit the [e-Submission help site](#).

### **Contact**

- The original hand signed tender report must be scanned and sent by email immediately after submission, to the following address: [EFSAProcurement@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:EFSAProcurement@efsa.europa.eu).
- Notifications for re-submission or withdrawal of tenders must be sent to: [EFSAProcurement@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:EFSAProcurement@efsa.europa.eu)

When communicating state the reference to the call for tenders and, if applicable, the Tender ID.



## **ANNEX 1 - FINANCIAL OFFER TEMPLATE**

The template to be used for preparing your financial offer is available as an Excel file and is uploaded in e-Tendering with all other procurement documents.



## **ANNEX 2 - DRAFT CONTRACT**

The contract which results from this procurement procedure will be based on the model annexed to these tender specifications.



### ANNEX 3: Performance indicators for service level agreement

| Indicator                   |   | Target/deadline  |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Platform performance</b> |   |  |
|                             | Capacity  | At least 5,000 simultaneous front-end users without affecting site response times                                  |
|                             | Site availability uptime, minimum:  | 99.0%  |
|                             | Site planned downtime, maximum:   | 120 hours (h) per annum  |
|                             | Scheduled maintenance to be carried out outside of office hours (08:00-18:00 CET)   | No scheduled maintenance to be carried out in office hours.  |
|                             | The contractor must provide quarterly reporting on statistics related to platform responsiveness including, but not limited to, website load time and page load time for both mobiles and desktops. | Quarterly reporting  |
| <b>Production times</b>     |   |  |
|                             | Typesetting   | 5 working days after receipt for a 50 page Word file, scalable for larger files up to a maximum of 10 working days |
|                             | Rapid publication   | 48 hours after receipt of Word version   |
|                             | Pre-adoption edit   | 5 working days after receipt for a 50-page Word file, scalable for larger files                                    |
|                             | Supporting publications   | 48 hours after receipt of Word version   |
|                             | Republications  | 72 hours after receipt of changes  |
| <b>Production quality</b>   |   |  |
|                             | Average copy-editing errors in proofs, max.   | 0.3/page   |
|                             | Average typeset/tagging errors in proofs, max.  | 0.3/page   |
|                             | Advance notification by E mail to EFSA of planned disruption of service   | Minimum of two weeks written notice  |
| <b>Service delivery</b>     |   |  |



|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  | Plagiarism check  | With 72 hours and with all relevant similarity issues notified to EFSA              |
|  | Publication of incorrect version or accidental disclosure of confidential information | No confidential information or incorrect version disclosed due to contractor error. |



## Annex 4

### Integration-specific requirements

EFSA has adopted an innovative event-driven architecture that integrates all the cloud-based systems that support its end-to-end risk assessment process. All the satellite systems are decoupled to each other and are integrated via an Event Grid. During the contract, EFSA might decide to undertake integration of its IT systems with those of the contractor enabling further automation of the publishing process.

For this reason, the contractor must be able, if requested, to have the following capabilities:

- Integration and customization:
  - collaborate with EFSA Architects and IT staff of the integrator to automate the publishing process by means of the EFSA event-driven architecture;
  - define the best solution cost and efficiency wise;
- EFSA integration layer:
  - receive and make custom secure RESTful API, JSON encoded (preferable) or XML;
  - collaboratively customize the event payload to support the process scenario that will be jointly defined;
- Events:
  - proactively make calls to EFSA APIs when publication-specific events happen;
  - receive events: the contractor IT system must be able to expose web hooks that will be called by the EFSA event-driven platform to notify of events.