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AGRI L.4/TL D (2011) / 947456
B34\DF1\Mid Term Q&A 2

Subject: Request for additional information related to the Open Call for Tender " Synthesis of Mid-Term Evaluations of Rural Development Programmes 2007-2013". Tender N° AGRI-2011-EVAL-05

Dear Madam, Dear Sir,

Please find enclosed the answers of the European Commission to the questions raised by a potential tenderer.

In view of improving the quality of the tenders and to ensure that all additional information is evenly distributed amongst the participants in the tendering process, this letter will be made available to all interested parties.

QUESTION 1:

If we have an independent expert joining our bid, are they required to complete the Legal Entity form for individuals?

ANSWER 1:

No, the submission of a **Legal Entity Form** is only required for:

- a) Lead contractor or sole service provider,
- b) all "service providers" of a consortium to be created (see tender specifications, section 7.3.2.) and,
- c) to any possible subcontractors (see tender specifications, section 7.3.3.) named in the offer or who might be proposed to be used during the time period of the expected contract.

Please note that, where a Tenderer proposes, though not exclusively, **"external experts"**, the following information is required for EACH "expert":

- (i) fully detailed up-to-date Curriculum Vitae of "expert";
- (ii) role and contribution (number of man-days) of "expert" to service;
- (iii) definition of current employment status of "expert";
- (iv) written confirmation from "expert" of intention to participate in the service, with the authorisation of the employer (University Department, etc.) **if applicable**;
- (v) a completed Conflict of Interests declaration by the "expert" (see Document N° 3 G to the Letter of Invitation to Tender).

QUESTION 2:

According to the Terms of Reference, Task 3.1 targets the „*quantitative assessment of the Evaluation Questions: each EQ should be assessed to determine at least: relevance of the question to the policy objectives, availability and quality of relevant data, completeness and utility of answers provided.*” and fourth topic of sub-theme 5.1 focuses on the „*Assessment of the Evaluation Questions (common and specific). Each Evaluation Question (EQ) should be assessed to determine at least: relevance of the question to the policy objectives, availability and quality of necessary data, completeness and utility of answers provided.*” The requirements related to indicators is quite similar to that.

Please confirm that our interpretation is correct:

- a) The evaluator is not expected to synthesise the answers given to the evaluation questions at EU level, but only to assess their relevance, the availability and quality of data used to answer these questions, completeness and utility of answers provided;
- b) Similarly, the evaluator is not expected to synthesise indicator values, but only to assess their relevance, utility and the availability and quality of data

ANSWER 2:

Each Tenderer should decide how they propose to approach the synthesis, and present their proposals in the offer. The Terms of Reference do not prescribe any particular detailed approach to the tasks, rather they set out the tasks which must be accomplished by the contractor. In this respect, Tenderers are advised to read carefully the sections 1 and 2 of the Terms of Reference. The choice of what methods to be used to fulfil the Terms of Reference is left to the judgement of the Tenderer.

In this context, Tenderers are reminded that for the evaluation of the quality of the technical proposal of the offer, in relation to the award criteria defined in section 9.3 of the tender specifications, Tenderers are requested to describe among others the approaches, methodologies and tools they envisage using for carrying out the tasks described in section 2 of the Terms of Reference.

QUESTION 3:

The ex ante synthesis of Rural Development Programmes 2007-2013 (prepared in 2008) applies a custom clustering of programming areas (the development of which was a foreseen task according to the ex ante synthesis report). The Terms of Reference of the current tender does not mention this way of targeting the synthetic work and, also, does not make any reference to the ex ante synthesis report. However, given its advantages and disadvantages, this approach could be considered to be applied in the present case as well.

Is that a possible and potentially supported option by the Contracting Authority to target the synthetic work using this approach, enabling a certain degree of comparison through time? Or, was it excluded from this tender on purpose, by any reasons?

ANSWER 3:

See Answer 2.

QUESTION 4:

The tender specification at page 28 point 2 requires the following documents to be provided in case of award within 14 days: „(2) a Certificate for Taxes paid : for criteria 9.1.4 (taxes), certification, less than 90 days old before the date of the award decision, issued by the tax authority of the country

concerned indicating that the Tenderer has paid their taxes;” In certain countries the issue of such document takes a long time, e.g. in Italy such certificates are valid for 6 months but it takes 4-6 weeks average to be issued. Thus, for example, an Italian firm needs to obtain such a document periodically in order comply with the 14-day deadline in case of winning the contract.

Is there an *estimated date for awarding the contract* so that tenderers can plan with this as regards the collection of necessary documentation?

ANSWER 4:

It is expected to award this contract before 16th December 2011, though not before 1st October.

Tenderers are reminded that this invitation to tender is in no way binding on the European Commission. The European Commission's contractual obligation commences only upon signature of the contract with the successful Tenderer. Up to the point of signature, the European Commission may either abandon the procurement or cancel the award procedure, without the candidates or Tenderers being entitled to claim any compensation. This decision must be substantiated and the candidates or Tenderers notified.

QUESTION 5:

On page 31 of the Tender Specifications your state:

“No names or CV of individuals must be included in any part of this Technical offer! The inclusion of such information may lead to an offer being excluded from the evaluation stage of the procedure.”

Does this mean, that:

- a) The technical Offer will have to be anonymous?
- b) No names of tendering companies are allowed to show up in the Technical offer?
- c) Or does this clause only refer to physical persons?

ANSWER 5:

- a) No
- b) No
- c) Yes

Please note that any information, questions or observations, of whatever kind, contained in this correspondence can in no way be regarded as a commitment on the part of the Commission. No binding commitment will be entered into until after completion of the procurement procedure, with the signing of the relevant contract.

[signed]

Leo MAIER
Head of Unit