



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS (Q & A)

Last update: 02/09/2011

Contract notice 2011/S 130-214986

Call for tender n° EAHC/2011/CP/01 concerning the conclusion of multiple Framework Contracts with reopening of competition for the provision of behavioural studies

Q & A No. 1 - posted on 01/08/2011

Q1: In point 17.3.1 of the tender specifications (selection criterion number 3) there is reference to the *perspective of cooperation with experts of the field*. What kind of evidence is needed in order to prove that the tenderer meets the above mentioned requirement? Is there any model for the statement of availability referred in point 17.2.3?

A1: As stated in point 17.3.1. of the tender specifications, *experts are considered professionals with at least 10 years of professional experience in the specific domain of relevance (economy, market research, marketing, business administration, law)*. In order to prove that the experts who may be engaged by the tenderer during the implementation of the Framework Contract meet the announced criterion, their Curriculum Vitae accompanied by statements of relevant **professional experience** is needed. No diplomas or lists of publications are obligatory.

As far as the 'statement of availability' is concerned: a statement signed by the expert and addressed to the tenderer indicating his/hers availability for the provision of his/hers services during the implementation of the respective tasks related to the EAHC/2011/CP/01 will be enough.

Q & A No. 2 - posted on 01/08/2011

Q2.1: Are there any guidelines in relation to the format and size of the administrative part of the tender?

A2.1. Each tenderer is free to present his offer in the most appropriate way. All obligatory information that should be included in the tender is presented in detail within the tender specifications. Information on the evidence requirements is also included therein.

Q2.2. Are there any limits in relation to the size of the technical part of the tender?

There are no size limits in relation to the length of the technical part of the tender. Each tenderer is free to choose the most appropriate way to present his/her offer. Nevertheless, he/she should make sure to address all the constituent elements of the announced award criteria.

Q2.3. In relation to the financial part there is a format enclosed in the call; We understand for the tender documentation that the EU will cover all the expenses of the project. Is this correctly understood? In other projects we need to cover a 25% of the cost ourselves.

A2.3. It should be underlined that the procedure EAHC/2011/CP/01 is a public procurement procedure aiming at the award of multiple Framework Contract(s). A public procurement procedure is distinguished from the one of a call for proposals; the former aims at the provision of a service that the contracting authority (in this case: EAHC, European Commission) deems necessary for the attainment of its mission. Therefore, the contracting authority pays 100% of the agreed price subject to delivery of the service. The latter aims at co-financing an action that, in principle, helps to achieve an objective being part of an EU policy. The present procedure belongs to the first category. Thus, the co- financing principle does not apply.

To that end, each tenderer should make an offer for the price that he/she requires in relation to the services to be provided. The instructions included within the Tender Specifications should be followed and annex V of the tender specifications should be filled in.

Q2.4. In the financial part we may justify expenses for work (per day) and travel expenses to meeting in Brussels and Luxembourg. We want to build a European consortium and this means recourses for project meetings. We will also open for expenses for a consumer survey. Where is it possible to place these costs?

A2.4. As explained in the previous answer, the procedure EAHC/2011/CP/01 aims at the award of multiple Framework Contract(s) for the provision of services described therein. A unit price must be indicated by each tenderer indicating the maximum cost for a meeting either in Brussels or Luxembourg that are envisaged to be convened by the contracting authority during the implementation of the Framework Contract(s). These costs are the only costs that will be reimbursed by the contracting authority during the implementation of a service contract. In case a Consortium aims to make a bid in relation to this call for tender, no expenses relating to the meetings of its members will be covered by the Contracting Authority. Therefore, the answer to this question is that the costs related to the creation, coordination of the entity that wishes to submit an offer may not be claimed separately. The tenderer is free to incorporate these costs in his/her price offer.

Q & A No. 3 - posted on 01/08/2011

Q3.1: I would like to ask if a company or a member of a consortium has a negative annual balance sheet from the year 2010, is it possible for this company or consortium to submit a bid for this tender?

A3.1: The negative annual balance sheets will affect the assessment of the profitability ratio that is one of the elements that determine the financial capacity of the tenderer. Therefore, a negative annual balance sheet will be assessed in conjunction with the rest of the elements that define the financial viability of a tenderer. Please refer to points 17.2.2.1 and 17.2.3. of the tender specifications where it is explained that a tenderer will be excluded from the procedure only in case the three financial viability indicators will be assessed as 'weak'. Therefore, a company or consortium with negative annual balance sheets are not automatically excluded and may submit a tender.

Q3.2: Is it correct that the 'statement of availability' is only required for outside experts and not team members?

A3.2: This interpretation is correct. The staff of the tenderer that are included in the offer do not need to sign any statement to prove their availability as it is their employment contract that links them to the tenderer.

Q & A No. 4 - posted on 01/08/2011

Q4.1: In point 17.2.2 of the tender specifications it is stated: "Tenderers (and in case of consortium, the consortium leader and the consortium members) are also requested to fill in the form "economic and financial capacity overview" in Annex VII. Can you please confirm that only subcontractors, that will be subcontracted for value of more than 60,000 € (following indications of page 12), will have to fill in Annex VII, while subcontractors for less than 60,000 € will not be requested to fill in annex VII?"

A4.1: We confirm that your interpretation is correct.

Q4.2: Award criterion 5 (point 18.1 page 29): can you please explain how the points for criterion 5 will be calculated and assigned based on the Annex VIII? In annex VIII the sum of the weights of the EU countries corresponds to 15,375 not to 20, so it is not just the sum of the weights of the countries a tenderer could cover for implementing online and laboratory experiments.

A4.2: The points accumulated according to the maximum of 15,375 pertaining to award criterion 5 will be interpreted as percentage of the 20 award points announced for criterion 5. A score of 15,375 in relation to member states coverage will be interpreted to 20 award points etc.

Q & A No. 5 - posted on 01/08/2011

Q5: Within the invitation to tender document (page 5) two kinds of approaches are suggested, a *specific perspective* or a more specific *holistic* perspective, where a specific market study is an example of a holistic perspective.

According to the Consumer Market Scoreboard 2010 banking services are among the markets which are most likely to be malfunctioning in Europe. At the same time, DG SANCO already has conducted a study on retail banking and on consumers' decision making in retail investment services. Does this mean that a market study on banking services (such a saving, loans, debt etc) is a less relevant issue as a topic of study? Or could banking services still be regarded as an important case for studying consumer behaviour factors and the effect of policy remedies?

A5: The answer is twofold. First of all, by *holistic* we mean "exploratory", that is a study that aims at identifying the main behavioural issues characterising a market or a cross-sectoral issue (e.g., greening household behaviour), without necessarily aiming at testing one or more policy interventions. Indeed, the pilot behavioural study we conducted in 2010, on retail investment services, belonged to this type.

By *specific* perspective, on the other hand, we mean a behavioural study that is already based on a solid amount of existing behavioural data and information, and that can therefore aim to tackle and test specific policy interventions.

Finally, banking services could still be regarded as a relevant issue as a topic of a study, for two reasons. Firstly, the 2010 pilot behavioural study on retail investment services took a holistic perspective and had a wide scope. One could envisage a follow-up study directed at fine-tuning the concrete policy options identified in the first study. Secondly, as retail investment services are a subset of banking services, one could envisage another behavioural study on services – such as mortgages - that belong to the latter group and not to the former.

Q & A No. 6 - posted on 09/08/2011

Q6.1: How will selection criteria be assessed? Will tenderers be given points according to how well they meet the selection criteria?

A6.1: The announced selection criteria set the requirements that the tenderer has to meet in order to be considered as financially and technically capable to provide the requested services under the Framework Contract (s). Their evaluation by the Contracting Authority leads to a YES or No result. No ranking between the tenderers is made at this stage. The tenderers who meet the selection criteria pass to the next phase, the evaluation of the award criteria.

Q6.2: What is the expected timeline for the evaluation of the tenders and the subsequent signature of the Framework Contract (s)? When does the contracting authority expect to launch the first request for specific services under the FWC (s)?

A6.2: According to an indicative timeline (that may in no way bind the Contracting Authority) the evaluation of the offers will be carried out between September and October 2011. In case of successful tenders, the FWC (s) should be signed during November 2011. It is planned that a request for specific services will be launched before the end of 2011.

Q6.3: What factors will determine whether you will eventually select 3 or 5 contractors?

A6.3: As announced in point 2 of the tender specifications the aim of the present procurement procedure is the conclusion of FWC (s) with minimum 3 and maximum 5 contractors. The Contracting Authority aims at signing five Framework Contracts with five economic operators who submitted the five *best value for money* tenders, assessed on the basis of the predefined criteria.

Q6.4: In case 5 contractors are awarded the Framework Contracts, it follows that all the 5 will be invited to submit offers when the Contracting Authority decides to request specific services?

A6.4: Yes, all the Framework Contractors will be invited to submit offers whenever the Contracting Authority decides to request specific services. Please refer to point 3.3. of the tender specifications (procedure for the conclusion of specific contracts) where it is indicated that the request for specific services will be sent simultaneously to all Framework Contractors.

Q6.5: Could you please clarify whether all the evidence included in point 17.3.2. (Evidence for selection criteria) needs to be included in the tender? In specific, what if all copies of academic diplomas or attestations of professional experience may not be obtained before the deadline for submission of tenders?

A6.5: If a tenderer may not provide an attestation of professional experience (considered as a proof of his/hers experience) that is indicated in a CV included in the offer, the tenderer will not

be directly eliminated. In conformity with the **proportionality principle** that guides the management of every public procurement procedure, the Contracting Authority, before excluding a tenderer, will give a deadline within which such any omission may be completed.

Q6.6: Could you please clarify if the annexes that need to be attached to CVs are required for all staff of e.g. a consortium or just the management/ supervisory staff of the consortium leader and/or members?

A6.6: As indicated within point 17.3.2. of the tender specifications, CVs and their annexes are needed for the management, supervisory or other member of the tenderers staff (consortium or not) and subcontractors that **will be engaged** for the preparation of the behavioural studies. It follows that the Contracting Authority does not need to receive CVs of the rest of the staff of a tenderer (managerial or not) that **will not be engaged** in the provision of the services to be requested under the FWC.

Q6.7: Could it suffice to submit a copy of the latest or highest ranking degree?

A6.7: The Contracting Authority requests to receive a copy of any diploma that proves that the tenderer meets the announced selection criteria.

Q6.8: Could you please clarify what public presentation means?

A6.8: Public presentation is considered as any presentation given from a person as speaker, facilitator or moderator. Please refer to point 17.3.1. of the tender specifications.

Q6.9: Annex Ib of the tender specifications (letter of Mandate); It is supposed to be signed in triplicate. Is this a clerical error?

A6.9: This provision reflects the logic that one original of the mandate is included in the offer, one is kept by the consortium member giving the mandate to the consortium leader and the third is kept by the consortium leader who receives the mandate.

Q6.10: Could you clarify that the legal entity form (Annex IIa, IIb, IIc) and financial entity form (Annex III) should be signed only by the consortium leader and not the rest of the consortium members?

A6.10: As indicated in point 4.1 of the tender specifications the consortium leader shall fill in Annex Ia, Annex IIa/IIb/IIc and Annex III. Therefore the reply to this question is yes, only the consortium leader has to sign these documents.

Q & A No. 7 - posted on 09/08/2011

Q7.11: It appears that annex V does not allow for indication of cost related to data acquisition; could you clarify that these costs have to be incorporated within the costs indicated per professional profile?

A7.11: As indicated within point 19 of the tender specifications the unit rate fees that the contractor offers for the provision of the service should include all costs and expenditures (secretariat, salaries, social security, administrative costs, **purchase of data**) incurred directly

and indirectly by the contractor in the performance of the tasks which may be entrusted to him. Therefore, the answer to this question is positive.

Q7.12: How should subcontracting costs (e.g. work undertaken by experimental laboratory) be costed?

A7.12: All costs related to the provision of the requested services (subcontracting included) should be calculated by the tenderer for the definition of the offered price.

Q7.13: If less than three tenders are evaluated as successful, the Contracting Authority will sign FWC with less than three economic operators?

A7.13: As indicated in point 3 of the tender specifications, the objective of this procurement procedure is to sign minimum three Framework Contracts; In case less than three tenders are successful the main purpose of the selected procurement procedure (reopening of competition) may not be properly served. Nevertheless, it should be underlined that **any relevant decision** remains at the discretion of the Contracting Authority.

Q7.14: Is there any scope for providing cost variations for data collection (e.g in relation to sample size, number of countries covered)?

A7.14: As indicated in the answer A.11 costs related to any data gathering should be taken into account for the calculation of the offered unit prices. Therefore, the answer to this question is negative, there is no such possibility.

Q7.15: In relation to the price offer for the hypothetical study (Box1 included under point 18 of the tender specifications) that will be used for the assessment of the best value for money bid: How many Member States should be 'covered' during the hypothetical implementation of the study and therefore considered as the **reference for comparison of the hypothetical offers**?

A7.15: Please refer to the **UPDATED** version of the tender specifications published on EAHC's website http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/consumers/consumers_tenders.html

Q & A No. 8 - posted on 09/08/2011

For proving the technical and professional capacity of a consortium

Q8.1: Have Curriculum Vitae to be submitted in Europass CVs format?

A8.1: As stated in point 17.3.2 of the tender specification, concise but informative Curricula Vitae of the management/supervisory staff and other members of the staff of the tenderer and subcontractors that will be engaged for the preparation of the behavioural studies must be provided, included the required annexes. The use of Europass CVs is indeed recommended. Nevertheless, use of another CV format will not result in any penalty.

Q 8.2: A statement of availability has to be submitted for each expert?

A 8.2: Indeed, statements of availability are required by all the experts that are proposed by the tenderer.

Q & A No. 9 - posted on 16/08/2011

Q9.1: As an international group, would each of the entities used within the group be considered as subcontractor?

A9.1. As stated in point 4 of the tender specifications, participation in this tendering procedures is open on equal terms to all natural and legal persons coming within the scope of the Treaties and to all natural and legal persons in a third country which has a special agreement with the European Union in the field of public procurement on the conditions laid down in that agreement. It follows that tenderers are those who define the respective role of each entity or individual that they propose to engage for the provision of the services under the FWC.

Q & A No. 10 - posted on 19/08/2011

Q10: In the Tender Specifications of the Call the hypothetical study is requested to "Be conducted in 15 Member States (10 belonging to EU-15 and 5 belonging to EU-12). Could you please indicate the country composition of EU-15 and EU-12)?

A10: The Tender Specifications refers in fact to the 27 EU countries where EU-15 includes the 15 "Old" Member States and EU-12 the "New" Member States. Please find below the composition of the two groups of Member States.

EU-15: Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Finland, Sweden and United-Kingdom.

EU-12: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Q & A No. 11 - posted on 24/08/2011

Q11: The staff categories (I to V) as defined in annex IX does not include supporting staff team, which will take care of the administrative management of the contract. How should we include these costs in the unit rates?

A11: As stated in point 19 of the Tender Specifications (Financial part), "unit rate fees per staff category per day should comprise all costs related to the tender's staff. Indicatively, the fees must include all costs (project management, quality control, training of the contractor's staff, support resources, etc.) and all expenditures (secretariat, salaries, social security, administrative costs, purchase of data etc.) incurred directly and indirectly by the contractor in the performance of the tasks which may be entrusted to him".

Consequently, supporting staff team which will take care of administrative management of the contract must be included in the relevant cost categories as described in annex IX.

Q & A No. 12 - posted on 29/08/2011

Q12: Do selection criteria outline in the tender specifications refer to the consortium as a whole and not only to the consortium leader?

A12: Selection criteria of consortia are stated in point 4.1 of the TS. Evidence must be provided for each member of the consortium for the selection criteria for economic and financial capacity. Selection criteria for technical and professional capacity will be assessed in relation to the combined capacities of all members of the consortium (as a whole), therefore the offers must include evidence on this.

Q & A No. 13 - posted on 30/08/2011

Q13.1: Can you clarify whether by 'behavioural experiment' is meant a laboratory experiment in a controlled laboratory setting (be it for an online or offline task) or rather a field experiment with an online subject pool?

A13.1: As indicated in point 3.2 of the TS, behavioural experiments to be provided within the context of this Framework Contract can be of three types: laboratory, online or field experiments:

Laboratory Experiments: These are experiments carried out in a physical laboratory, which may imply a personal interaction with experimenters;

Online Experiments: These experiments are carried out online, with a larger sample of participants and without a personal interaction with experimenters;

Field Experiments: These experiments are carried out on the field, are compatible with randomisation of subjects into treatment and control groups. In this type of experiments, subjects are recruited in the field rather than in labs, using field goods rather than induced valuations, and using field context rather than terminology in instructions.

Q13.2: Can you clarify whether by 'experiment' is meant the traditional test of an intervention (on one or several treatment groups vs. a control group) or rather a simple 'survey' of attitude?

A13.2: As explicitly indicated in point 3.2 of the TS2 (Task 2), behavioural experiments shall be conducted in the form of RCTs. Point 3.2 of the TS2 (Task 2), behavioural experiments shall be conducted in the form of RCTs. Point 3.2 (Task 2) also mentions the Incentive Compatibility condition. Hence, experiments should be interpreted as tests or trials, and not confused with surveys of attitudes or self-reported preferences.

Q13.3: Are online experiments considered equal for the assessment of the relevant award criterion as laboratory experiments, considering their substantial differences?

A13.3: As explicitly indicated in point 3.2 of the TS2, Task 2 requires the "Collection of first-hand information via the organisation of online, laboratory and/or field experiments coupled with questionnaires". Each type of experiment (laboratory, online, field experiments) has its own specific features, and responds to specific needs. Please refer to the detailed presentation include in Award Criterion 2.

Q13.4: Are surveys preparatory/complementary tools for the design of experiments or, instead, are they the key instrument of the experiment?

A13.4: The role of the conduction of surveys as preparatory/complementary tools to design proper experiments is described in point 3.2 of the TS. Please refer to this point. As stated in point 3.2, Task 1 (page 6 of the TS2), "the purpose of the review and data gathering is solely to prepare the laboratory and/or field experiments to be conducted under task 2". This implies that surveys are preparatory/complementary tools to design proper experiments. The TS2 (page 8) also indicates that "Behavioural experiments should be carried out using sufficient monetary incentives to avoid unreliable replies". As traditional surveys do not meet this condition, it follows that they are not the key instrument of the experiment.

Q13.5: As to the hypothetical study, is the tenderer required to propose a methodology to carry out an ad-hoc survey or just a methodology on how to collect existing survey data?

A13.5: As indicated in point 18 of the TS, tenderers should refer in detail to all points described in the specifications. In relation to the hypothetical study, tenderers should elaborate on all the elements included in box 1, as well as on all the elements of Award Criterion 4.

Q13.6: How can online experiments (required for the hypothetical study) satisfy the main methodological principles of behavioural experiments

A13.6: An experiment may be conducted online, while meeting the requirements of randomisation of subjects and the incentive compatibility condition. As an example, please refer to the study quoted in footnotes 8 of the TS2. This study provides a clear example of how to design online experiments (see paragraphs 410-412): http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/strategy/docs/final_report_en.pdf.

Updates/Other clarifications.

As indicated within A7.15, an updated version of the tender specifications including additional information that should be taken into account for the elaboration of the hypothetical study (chapter 18 of the tender specifications and in specific points: a) Award Criterion 4-Elements to be addressed in relation to the hypothetical study and b) Hypothetical Study included within Box 1) has been published on EAHC's website. Tenderers should take this additional information into account in preparing their bid.