



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Analysis, Evaluation, External Relations
Impact Assessment, Evaluation

Brussels,
EMPL A3

Q & A

Subject: Open call for tender VT/2013/018 - ESF — data collection and validation support for the management of the European Social Fund 2014–2020

Question Nr 1:

Is Serbia among the eligible countries?

Answer Nr. 1:

Under the Stabilisation and Association Agreements (SAA) FYROM, Albania and Montenegro have been granted access to tendering procedures of the Union regardless the value of the purchase. Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina will be granted access when the SAA enter into force.

The SAA with Serbia (Art. 76) was signed on 29 April 2008 but has not yet been ratified.

Serbia is not part of THE PLURILATERAL AGREEMENT ON GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT.

Thus, participation in this tendering procedure is not open to Serbia.

Please find further information under the following link:

http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/gproc_e/memobs_e.htm#parties

Commission européenne/Europese Commissie, 1049 Bruxelles/Brussel, BELGIQUE/BELGIË

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<u>Nr.</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Questions:</u>	<u>Answers</u>
2	Informative	The ultimate submission date for the proposal is 18 July 2013. The proposal should be valid for at least 9 months.	<p>a) What will be the envisaged date when the EC will make a final decision to grant the assignment?</p> <p>b) What will be the envisaged start date of the contract?</p>	<p>a) November 2013</p> <p>b) December 2013</p>
3	Tooling	In the programming period 2014-2020 the EC will continue to collate the aggregated data on common indicators received in structured form from the Member States and make them available as standardized reports. To this end the EC will have to update the current SFC2007 application to SFC2014.	<p>a) There is no mention of monitoring systems. Which monitoring systems are used?</p> <p>b) How many monitoring systems are in use?</p>	<p>a) It is not clear whether the question refers to the EC or MAs.</p> <p>b) How many monitoring systems are currently used in the MAs is not known since MS do not need to inform the EC about the monitoring system they use. There might be similarities between MS' monitoring systems depending on the characteristics of participants. Some aspects might be used in several MS.</p>
4	Informative	Set up and perform data support center for all EU Members and MA's with regard to the EC ESF requirements.	<p>a) Data support center is setup, consists and runs during contract period. What are the specifications for the period after the contract.</p> <p>b) What will be the role EC or MS staff in the support center, besides contact moments for continuous monitoring reports?</p>	<p>a) There are no specifications available yet. It is not decided yet whether to continue the data support center beyond the contract period.</p> <p>b) The set-up and running of a data support center is the task of the bidder, as set out in "Task 2". The input of EC and MS is exhaustively described therein.</p>
5	Informative	Subject of the contract: It is stated that "the EC envisages for the first time the set up and running of a "data support centre" for all EU Member States and MAs".	<p>a) In what way is the EC currently supported by external providers in addressing issues around the data collection, validation or transport from MSs to the EC?</p> <p>b) If existing, what does this support consist of?</p> <p>c) If existing, what is the reason for the EC to decide to set up the support centre instead of continuing with the support currently provided by external providers.</p>	<p>a) The EC has currently no external support on the issue addressed in this contract. The EC uses framework contracts to assist its own staff in among others the following tasks: development of IT systems, processing of information, carry out of specific analysis and studies. These assistances are carried out both intra and extra muros.</p> <p>b) see reply to a)</p>

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6	Informative	Task 1: It is stated: “....., interviewing EC and MS staff to clarify the possible problems in relation to data collection”.	<p>a) How many interviews does the EC envisage that need to take place?</p> <p>b) Will it be necessary to interview every MS or can we limit ourselves to a sample of the MSs?</p> <p>c) How many EC staff need to be interviewed?</p>	<p>c) see reply to a)</p> <p>a) It is anticipated that the majority of MS are covered by the interviews.</p> <p>b) The approach should be problem-driven. The number of interviews with MS is determined on the basis of prior knowledge of MS monitoring systems and knowledge gained through interviews with EC staff. The interviews can be phone-based interviews.</p> <p>c) A majority of geo desks in charge of MS should be interviewed.</p>
7	Motivation for this tender		<p>a) We would like to know more about the EC’s need/ motivation for this tender. To what extent can we have insight into its evaluation of the 2007-2014 monitoring programme and the specific need for a data support centre?</p> <p>b) This is a tender to develop a data support centre for the first time. However, has a company, via a previous tender, already had a similar assignment, from the EC, to provide support to MAs in the collection of data? If so, which company/ companies?</p>	<p>a) There is no evaluation of "the 2007-2014 monitoring programme". Relevant findings and results from the on-going ex-post evaluation of the ESF 2007-2013 could be useful as input to the assignment. They will be communicated once available.</p> <p>b) no</p>
8	ICT		<p>a) Which company develops the common web application (SFC 2014, as mentioned in VT_2013_018_EN)?</p> <p>b) On which ICT platform (technical name) is this common web application developed?</p> <p>c) And which company will maintain and update the common web application in 2014 and further?</p> <p>d) Do you have an overview regarding which ICT-programmes the MA’s are currently (for ESF 2007-2014) using themselves for collection, recording,</p>	<p>a) There is not a single company that has obtained a contract for the development of the system. Different companies supply the Commission with consultants that contribute to the project development.</p> <p>b) Weblogic + Oracle</p> <p>c) There is not a single company that has obtained a contract for the development of the system. Different companies supply the Commission with consultants that contribute to</p>

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9	assignment		<p>storage and transmission of their respective ESF's Operational Programmes? And if so, could you share this with us?</p> <p>a) What will happen after the assignment is fully delivered (including the 1 year extension as mentioned in the contract model)?</p> <p>b) What will happen with the data support centre?</p> <p>c) Is it the intention that EC staff will maintain the data centre?</p> <p>d) Will another tender be submitted for a new contractor?</p> <p>e) Should the support centre function automatically (via webportal and guidance documents)?</p> <p>f) Could you provide some examples of the questions that MAs might ask, as mentioned in Task 2? Could you provide some figures (percentages, numbers) regarding which questions will probably be asked most?</p> <p>g) Could you provide an indication of how much time, on average, previous contractors and/ or the EC have spent in answering similar questions?</p> <p>h) Should any distinction be made regarding the collection of the set of common indicators (according to annex XXIII) regarding the different ESF sub-measures per country? Or should all data be collected similarly?</p> <p>i) Will the MAs be obligated by the EC to co-operate with service provider regarding the above mentioned tender?</p>	<p>the project development.</p> <p>d) No</p> <p>a) Not decided yet.</p> <p>b) Not decided yet.</p> <p>c) Not decided yet.</p> <p>d) Not decided yet.</p> <p>e) Please see sect. 4, task 2 of the specifications</p> <p>f) Please see sect. 2.3 of the specifications</p> <p>g) The EC has no external support covered by the issue addressed in this contract. There is no dedicated helpdesk yet in place.</p> <p>h) Please consult http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/doc_offic/official/regulation/pdf/2014/proposals/regulation/esf/esf_proposal_en.pdf and http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/doc_offic/official/regulation/pdf/2014/proposals/regulation/esf/amended_esf_proposal_12032013_en.pdf</p> <p>i) No</p>

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10	tenderers		<p>a) What are the key requirements of the tenderers? Is the emphasis on “ICT” and/ or “ESF programme understanding (multi-country)” and/ or “data methodological support”, or other?</p> <p>b) For 1 potential partner in our grouping of service providers, the second financial year is still underway. Would this result in a rejection for the grouping, according to the selection criteria 1a (page 12 of VT_2013_018_EN)?</p> <p>c) And what if this partner would be a sub-contractor?</p>	<p>a) The required professional experience of the service provider is listed exhaustively in the selection criteria, sect. 12,2 c) of the specifications.</p> <p>b) We assume you refer to sect. 12.1) a), p. 13. This would not result in a rejection. In such case, the partner should submit, together with the available documents establishing the financial capacity, a statement justifying why the partner is unable to provide all references requested by the contracting authority. If a tender is submitted by a consortium, the consortium as a whole should demonstrate a solid financial capacity to carry out the tasks set out in the tender specifications.</p> <p>c) As subcontractor it would not be necessary to submit the administrative documents listed under points 11 and 12. However, subcontractors are requested to provide a letter of commitment declaring their involvement in the contract.</p>
11	Specification Tender No VT/2013/18, item 12.Selection criteria, par. 2) Professional and technical capacity	I would like to understand	whether every expert must be able to speak minm. all 3 foreign languages (English, French and German) or wherther it is sufficient if only team of experts as a whole group is able to speak minimum these 3 languages (that means that some experts can speak English and German and other experts can speak French and English, for example).	The team of the contractor or consortium as a whole should demonstrate the language capability required.

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12	Specification Tender No VT/2013/18, item 9 Participation		I would like to understand whether it is sufficient to fulfil the requirement of having concluded a specific agreement in the area of public contract with the Union, if the legal entity participating in this tender have concluded a specific agreement in the area of public contract with the managing authority in one country in providing services for execution of national project co-financed by the European Social Fund.	Yes
13	Specifications' Tender No VT/2013/18 item 12 point 2c) on professional capacity	The requirements read as follows: " <i>The project director and the project manager should have proven experience in the field of the call, including in depth knowledge of data management, statistics and the European Social Fund</i> ".	Our interpretation is that you require that both the project director and project manager should be experienced in all three domains. Would you consider a proposal that presents the two profiles with a mixture of experience that covers these three domains between them when assessed together, meaning that the two of them combined will possess this experience instead of each of them having to cover all of the three domains? Or would you instead consider this as non-compliant and disqualify the tender as a result?	The proven experience, including in depth knowledge has to be ensured on the management level (project director, project manager). Gaps in the required experience/knowledge cannot be compensated by the team.
14	Specifications, Tender No VT/2013/18 item 11, Exclusion Criteria, in paragraph 1	It is stated that "bidders must provide a statement on their honour <regarding article 106 & 107 of the financial regulation>". And in paragraph 2 of Chapter 11 (page 13) it is stated that "The tenderer to whom the contract is to be awarded shall provide, ..., the evidence referred to in Article 143 of	So, just to be fully sure, our question is: It is not required by the bidders, whom are not under the circumstances as mentioned in article 106, to submit the satisfactory evidence with the bid (on or before July 18th), but this evidence will be provided at a later stage once the contract is to be awarded to them? In earlier tenders by the EC (last year) for which we have submitted a bid, we did have to provide the mentioned evidence (such as a sworn statement for a notary for example) with the bid. So, we wanted to be absolutely sure we do not have to submit the evidence	Exactly. Tenderers must provide a declaration on their honour, duly signed and dated, that they are not in one of the situation referred to in Articles 106 and 107 (1) of the Financial Regulation with the bid. The evidence documents confirming the above mentioned declaration will be requested by the contracting authority at the latest when the contract is to be awarded. However, if the documents are already available bidders are free to submit all evidence together with the

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		Rules of Application...”. The provided format “Declaration of Honour” on the DG’s website (dechonor_en.pdf), also clearly mentions that evidence should be provided in case an award of contract.	with this bid VT_2013_018.	declaration on their honour in the bid.