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*Specifications – Invitation to Tender VT/2011/2*

**SUPPORT SERVICES FOR THE PEER REVIEW IN SOCIAL PROTECTION  
AND SOCIAL INCLUSION PROGRAMME**

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## 1. TITLE OF THE CONTRACT

### Peer Review in Social Protection and Social Inclusion

VT/2011/2

Contract notice n°

## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1. The Europe 2020 Strategy

The Europe 2020 Strategy<sup>1</sup> launched by the European Commission in March 2010 sets out a new economic strategy to go out of the crisis and prepare EU economy for the next decade.

Europe 2020 puts forward three mutually reinforcing priorities:

- Smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation.
- Sustainable growth: promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy.
- Inclusive growth: fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion.

Five targets are set which define where the EU should be by 2020 and against which progress can be tracked, and which Member States has been asked to translate into national targets reflecting starting points:

- 75 % of the population aged 20-64 should be employed
- 3% of the EU's GDP should be invested in R&D
- The "20/20/20" climate/energy targets should be met
- The share of early school-leavers should be below 10% and at least 40% of the younger generation should have a degree or diploma.
- Promoting social inclusion, in particular through the reduction of poverty, by aiming to lift at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and exclusion

#### **Inclusive growth – a high employment economy delivering, social and territorial cohesion.**

Inclusive growth means empowering people through high levels of employment, investing in skills, fighting poverty and modernising labour markets, training and social protection systems so as to help people anticipate and manage change, and build a cohesive society. It is also essential that the benefits of economic growth

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<sup>1</sup> EUROPE 2020 A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth COM(2010)2020 final  
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52010DC2020:EN:HTML>

spread to all parts of the Union, including its outermost regions, thus strengthening territorial cohesion. It is about ensuring access and opportunities for all throughout the lifecycle. Europe needs to make full use of its labour potential to face the challenges of an ageing population and rising global competition.

Action under this priority will require modernising, strengthening employment, education and training policies and social protection systems by increasing labour participation and reducing structural unemployment, as well as raising corporate social responsibility among the business community.

Access to childcare facilities and care for other dependents will be important in this respect. Implementing flexicurity principles and enabling people to acquire new skills to adapt to new conditions and potential career shifts will be key.

A major effort will be needed to combat poverty and social exclusion and reduce health inequalities to ensure that everybody can benefit from growth. Equally important will be the ability to meet the challenge of promoting a healthy and active ageing population to allow for social cohesion and higher, longer productivity.

## **2.2. The European Platform against poverty**

In order to meet the targets of the Europe 2020 strategy, the Heads of States and Governments adopted a series of flagship initiatives. Among these initiatives the **European platform against poverty**<sup>2</sup> sets out ways to help Member States move up a gear in fighting social exclusion and thus ensuring economic, social and territorial cohesion by helping the poor and socially excluded and enabling them to play an active part in society.

It identifies following areas for action:

- Delivering actions across the policy spectrum;
- Greater and more effective use of the EU Funds to support social inclusion;
- Promoting evidence-based social innovation;
- Working in partnership and harnessing the potential of the social economy;
- Enhanced policy coordination among the Member States

## **2.3. The Open Method of coordination for social protection and social inclusion**

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<sup>2</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: A European framework for social and territorial cohesion COM (2010)758final - <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0758:FIN:EN:PDF>

Commission Staff Working paper- List of key initiatives Accompanying document to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: A European framework for social and territorial cohesion COM(2010) 758 final - <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52010SC1564:EN:NOT>

The Open Method of Coordination for social inclusion (OMC) was launched in 2001 as a comprehensive process of coordination at EU level. Later on it was extended to pensions, health and long term care and became the Open Method of coordination for social protection and social inclusion.

Common objectives for social inclusion were defined and Member States were invited to present national action plans (NAP social inclusion), underpinned by indicators and monitoring mechanisms.

In July 2008 the European Commission published a Communication on "A renewed commitment to social Europe: Reinforcing the Open Method of Coordination for Social Protection and Social Inclusion"<sup>3</sup> as part of its Renewed Social Agenda. On the basis of a review of existing evidence on the effectiveness of the OMC the Communication concludes that while the Social OMC has become an important tool to foster cooperation and coordination of Member States in the field of social inclusion and social protection its potential is largely underused and a number of weaknesses need to be addressed. The Communication contains a number of proposals aimed at:

- Increasing political commitment and visibility of the process in order to enhance delivery;
- Strengthening the positive articulation with other EU policies, through better mainstreaming of social objectives in other policy areas and particularly through better interaction with the "growth and jobs" strategy;
- Reinforcing the analytical tools underpinning the process, with a view to move towards the definition of quantified targets and enhance evidence-based policy making;
- Increasing ownership in Member States, boosting implementation and enhancing mutual learning, through better monitoring mechanisms, better stakeholders' involvement and more effective horizontal and vertical governance arrangements.

The integration of the Social OMC into the Europe 2020 strategy provides a stronger basis for the EU to meet its social goals. It is important that the instruments and tools that have been developed under the Social OMC cross-fertilise with the governance architecture of Europe 2020, to best serve the purposes of the new strategy. Therefore, the Commission will continue to work with Member States and key stakeholders and foster solutions that ensure ownership, commitment and delivery. The Commission will discuss with Member States and other institutional and non-institutional actors, how to best adapt the working methods of the Social Open Method of Coordination to the new governance of Europe 2020. An external assessment of the *Effectiveness and the impact of the Social OMC in preparation of the new cycle* has also been

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<sup>3</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - "A **renewed commitment to social Europe**: Reinforcing the Open Method of Coordination for Social Protection and Social Inclusion" COM(2008)418final - <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52008DC0418:EN:HTML>

conducted. The Commission will present a report before the end of 2011 summarising the orientations emerged and the follow up it will give to it.

The EPSCO Council conclusions of 6 December 2010 on *The Social dimension in the context of an integrated Europe 2020 Strategy*<sup>4</sup> invites the Commission to support the work of the Social Protection Committee (SPC) in its areas of competence of the social dimension of Europe and The SPC is invited to ensure the monitoring of the social situation and the development of social protection policies, including an assessment of the social dimension of Europe 2020.

#### **2.4. The Peer review Programme in the field of social protection and social inclusion**

The Peer Review programme (<http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu>) is a key instrument of the Social Open Method of Coordination. Peer Review seminars enable an open discussion on social protection and social inclusion policies in the different EU Member States and facilitate the mutual learning process among them. They contribute to the dissemination and identification of good practice on the basis of a systematic exchange of experiences and evaluation of policies, actions, or institutional arrangements taking place in seminars hosted by individual Member States. The outcome of the peer reviews will also feed into the annual assessment of the social dimension of Europe 2020. This also entails that the Peer Review programme should be consistent with the main messages emerging from the European Semester in the relevant areas.

The aim of the Peer Review programme is to:

- improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the policies and the strategies for social inclusion, pensions, healthcare and long term care in present and future Member States and at EU level, by learning from the experiences in the Member State;
- analyse strengths and weaknesses of the policies and strategies for social inclusion, pensions, healthcare and long term care in present and future Member States and at EU level, and provide recommendations of how improvements can be made.
- facilitate the transfer of key components of policies and social innovative measures or of institutional arrangements, which have proved effective and sustainable in their original context and are relevant to other contexts.
- to document and disseminate innovative policies that are transferable and sustainable for use in the reporting on the social dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy, including developing key messages and outcomes from the program to be used in the assessment of the social dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy.

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/118244.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/118244.pdf)

This programme started in 2004 and has been regularly assessed as a valuable tool for mutual learning. In recent years, several reports and studies indicate ways of improving or complementing the Peer Review programme, including

- the Joint Report 2007<sup>5</sup> covering the results SPC discussion on strengthening the working methods of the OMC,
- 2008 Commission Communication on "A renewed commitment to social Europe - Reinforcing the Reinforcing the Open Method of Coordination for Social Protection and Social Inclusion " <sup>6</sup> (part of the Renewed Social Agenda).

In addition, ongoing processes and studies may give further input to improving the the Peer Review programme:

- The results of an external assessment of the *Effectiveness and the impact of the Social OMC in preparation of the new cycle*. This external evaluation of the social OMC can be used by the Social Protection Committee and the European Commission to support decisions about its role and shape after 2010.
- A study "*Analysis and follow-up of mutual learning in the context of Peer Review in Social Protection and Social Inclusion Programme*" will be published by mid 2012. It will seek to give a better understanding of the role of the peer review programme in stimulating innovation in social inclusion and social protection policies across the EU and to identify how the process could be improved in the future.
- The Social Protection Committee will in 2011 prepare an opinion on to ensure coherence between the objectives and the working-methods of the Social OMC and the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

Responding to this, the Commission may revise the working methods of the Peer Review programme within the framework set out here, to strengthen the mutual learning process and aligning the Peer Review programme closer to the Europe 2020 strategy, taking into account the "European Platform against poverty and social exclusion".

## 2.5. PROGRESS

PROGRESS<sup>7</sup> is the EU employment and social solidarity programme, set up to provide financial support for the attainment of the European Union's objectives in employment, social affairs and equal opportunities as set out in the Social Agenda<sup>8</sup>, as

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<sup>5</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=2014&langId=en>

<sup>6</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/Notice.do?val=473795%3Acs&lang=en&list=473795%3Acs%2C&pos=1&page=1&nbl=1&pgs=10&hwords=>

<sup>7</sup> Decision No 1672/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity — Progress, JO L 315 of 15.11.2006

<sup>8</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Renewed social agenda: Opportunities, access and solidarity in 21st century Europe COM/2008/0412 final of 02.07.2008.

well as to the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. This new strategy, which has a strong social dimension, aims at turning the EU into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. The European Union needs coherent and complementary contributions from different policy strands, methods and instruments, including the PROGRESS programme, to support the Member States in delivering on the Europe 2020's goals.

The PROGRESS mission is to strengthen the EU's contribution in support of Member States' commitments and efforts to create more and better jobs and to build a more cohesive society. To this effect, PROGRESS is instrumental in:

- Providing analysis and policy advice on PROGRESS policy areas;
- Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of EU legislation and policies in PROGRESS policy areas;
- Promoting policy transfer, learning and support among Member States on EU objectives and priorities; and
- Relaying the views of the stakeholders and society at large.

More specifically, PROGRESS supports:

- The implementation of the European Employment Strategy (section 1);
- The implementation of the open method of coordination in the field of social protection and inclusion (section 2);
- The improvement of the working environment and conditions including health and safety at work and reconciling work and family life (section 3);
- The effective implementation of the principle of non-discrimination and promotion of its mainstreaming in all EU policies (section 4);
- The effective implementation of the principle of gender equality and promotion of its mainstreaming in all EU policies (section 5).

The present call for tenders is issued in the context of the implementation of the 2011 annual work plan which can be consulted at <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=658&langId=fr>

### **3. SUBJECT OF THE CONTRACT**

The **Peer Review in Social Protection and Social Inclusion programme** is currently subcontracted together with the management of a Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion. Both programmes share a common communication strategy. The current contract will end in February 2012.

The Commission has decided to split the Peer Reviews in social protection and social inclusion and the Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion in two different contracts.

The subject of the 'Peer Reviews in social protection and social inclusion' contract is to provide support services to the Commission for the management of the Peer Reviews in the field of social protection and social inclusion, including communication activities for the peer review program and facilitating the website publishing of the public reports of the Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion on the peer review website.



The contractor will be in charge of the organisation of the Peer Review meetings with the Commission and the participating countries, in accordance with a work plan and calendar agreed with the Commission on which the Commission will consult with representatives from the Member States in the SPC. The Contractor will deliver the support services through a coordinating team (the Core Team) lead by a Project Director. The Project Director will be the European Commission's main contact point.

The contractor in charge of the Peer Review will also be in charge of developing and implementing a communication strategy aimed at ensuring timely documentation and broad and effective dissemination of the key messages and findings of the peer review programme. The contractor will also facilitate the publishing of public reports by the independent experts on social inclusion on the website.

#### **4. PARTICIPATION**

Please note that:

The competition is open to any natural person or legal entity coming within the scope of the Treaties and any other natural person or legal entity from a third country which has concluded with the Communities a specific agreement in the area of public contracts, under the conditions provided for in that agreement.

Where the Multilateral Agreement on Public Contracts concluded within the framework of the WTO applies, the contracts are also open to nationals of States that have ratified this Agreement, under the conditions provided for therein. It should be noted that research and development services, which come under category 8 of Annex II A of Directive 2004/18/CE, are not covered by this Agreement.

#### **5. TASKS TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE CONTRACTOR**

##### **5.1. GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE**

The contract will cover:

- the 27 Member States,
- Iceland,
- Lichtenstein,
- Norway,
- Croatia,
- former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and
- Turkey.

The other Western Balkan countries included in the stabilisation and association process may join the PROGRESS Programme upon negotiating Memoranda of Understanding. If, during the contract period, some of these countries start to participate in the Programme, an extension of the contract will be made by negotiated procedure according to Article 126(1)(f) of Commission Regulation n° 2342/2002 (EC, Euratom) laying down detailed rules for the implementation of

Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities<sup>9</sup>.

## **5.2. ORGANISATION OF PEER REVIEW MEETINGS IN SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION**

The programme consists of a series of Peer Review sessions, in which a host country typically:

- presents policies, policy reforms, measures, programmes and social innovations which have great potential for dissemination, in view of their particularly good results and their general interest for the Union (good practice);
- invites other countries in order to gather expert advice to inform the process of preparation of a major policy reform or new programme or institutional arrangement.

The experience of the host country is confronted with the comments and critical analysis of a number of participant countries (peer countries) as well as where required input from stakeholders such as NGOs, service providers and social partners and where appropriate, people experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

The review may involve local visits to institutions active in the delivery of policies, workshops, interviews with those responsible for local implementation, analysis of evaluation studies etc. Such visits may also allow for direct contact with the persons targeted by the policy in question.

The contractor will be in charge of:

- the identification, liaison, preparation, support and quality assurance of the policy experts in social inclusion, pensions, healthcare or long term care for each of the reviewed policy themes or practices;
- the preparation of the agenda;
- the organisation of the seminars and visits, including the logistic support;
- the co-ordination and dissemination of the input from the experts prior to the seminars and meetings;
- ensuring the quality of the report prepared for the peer review by the thematic expert;
- the provision of a complete logistical support for the participants;
- the management of travel and accommodation costs of participants;
- the facilitation and chairing of the seminars;
- the production and publication of reports from the peer reviews, highlighting key messages and outcomes, potentially transferable, lessons and demonstrated mutual learning impact in line with the aims of the program (as indicated under chapter 3. Subject of the contract);

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<sup>9</sup> Official Journal L 357 of 31/12/2002

- the liaison with the Commission officials involved in the programme;
- the ongoing evaluation of the methodological aspects and of the results of the programme.

### **5.2.1. Seminars**

Between 5 and 8 peer review seminars, each with a duration of around 1,5 days, are expected to take place during each year. The maximum number of peer review seminars will be 8 per contract year. The annual programme of Peer Reviews will be agreed upon by the Commission together with Member States and transmitted to the contractor. Within the maximum number of peer reviews per year, one or two peer reviews can be organised in a more flexible manner during the year, responding to a need from Member States to relatively quickly arrange a policy exchange with other Member States on a specific issue that has arisen.

Each Peer Review seminar will typically involve:

- a) One or more representatives from the host country;
- b) One representative from each peer country. The number of participating 'peer' countries may vary, also depending on the type of the review, but it should be comprised between four and ten. In exceptional cases, peer reviews on topics of key strategic importance may involve larger number of participants (with a reduction in number of participants or peer reviews in the program for the year to keep within number of participants in total).
- c) One independent expert in the domain of the Peer Review (social inclusion, pensions, healthcare, long term care) to assist each representative, both from the host and the peer countries;
- d) The member of the Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion or ASISP<sup>10</sup> network in the host country;
- e) One thematic independent expert to present a key note on the policy under review, setting it in a broader comparative European context and helping to draw policy relevant conclusions;
- f) One or two European Commission officials: they will support the chairperson in steering the discussions, clarify any policy question related to the EU;
- g) Representatives of relevant stakeholders: two representatives of European NGOs or other stakeholder organisations and possibly one or two representatives of national stakeholders from the host country expressing the viewpoints of the beneficiaries or other important actors involved;
- h) One or two representatives of the Peer Review Core Team responsible for the smooth implementation of the Peer Review process and prepared to assist the chairperson with the facilitation of the meeting;

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<sup>10</sup> Analytical support on the socio-economic impact of social protection reform:  
<http://www.socialprotection.eu/>

- i) A professional journalist and editor for the documentation of the meeting and the discussions.

In addition to the Peer Review Core Team involved in the organisation, the contractor is expected to identify and hire the experts mentioned under e) and i) and to pay for their fees.

The seminars are to be held in the meeting premises provided by the host country. Most host countries organise at least one meal for the participants to the Peer Review.

The contractor will be in charge of the organisation and payment of travel, accommodation and meals (other than foreseen by the host country, see above) for all participants with the exception of Commission staff and host country participants (taking account of 8 seminars and an average number of participants entitled to reimbursement of costs of 25 persons per seminar).

### **5.2.2. The thematic independent expert in the Peer Review**

In each Peer Review seminar the thematic independent expert mentioned above will bring a European comparative perspective on the specific topic of the review drawn. The expert will document the policy under review, its sustainability and how it may be transferred, in line with the aims of the peer review programme (as indicated under chapter 3. Subject of the contract). This includes drawing out key messages and learning components that can be feed into the yearly assessment of the social dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy. The thematic independent expert should have extensive international level research experience and excellent writing and presentation skills. The thematic independent expert will be proposed by the contractor and approved by the European Commission.

She/he will carry out the following tasks:

- prepare a "comments and questions" paper on the theme of the peer review focusing on evaluation results, bringing European comparative aspects and presenting the main questions to be addressed;
- analyse and synthesise the comment papers of the peer countries;
- assist the Peer Review Core Team of the consultant organisation in cooperation with the host country and the Commission with the preparation of the meeting and the agenda;
- give a short presentation at the meeting with a focus on evaluating or monitoring results and European comparisons, and with a synthesis of key questions to be addressed during the meeting;
- participate actively in the Review discussions;
- draft summary (short report) of the Review;
- amend, if necessary, the discussion paper following the meeting;
- draft a synthesis report in English.

Other experts will contribute to the preparation of the Peer Reviews by presenting discussion or opinion papers: host country experts, peer countries' experts, European stakeholders' organisations representatives ("experts" from European social NGO networks, European regional or/and local authorities networks or social partners European networks). Their participation will be coordinated by the contractor but the contractor will neither have to identify them nor to pay fees for them.

### **Documentation and dissemination**

Summaries, reports and expert papers should be prepared by the contractor and disseminated in English on the Peer Review web-site and a copy of the final version should be sent to the Commission in a ready-to-publish format. In addition, the synthesis report and the summary, including a news article (see below) shall be made available in English, French, German and the language(s) of the host country.

As the number of printed copies needed varies between the peer reviews and to ensure that only the necessary quantities of each report is printed, the synthesis report should only be printed on demand. The contractor should therefore on demand print and disseminate the synthesis reports. The maximum number of synthesis reports in total that can be printed and distributed for each year is 1800 copies. Within this number printed copies of the above mentioned languages should be done according to the needs of the Commission. Within this limit the dissemination of printed copies directly to participants and stakeholders of the Peer Reviews and the SPC delegates are also included. The contractor will further disseminate the reports in accordance with the aims and activities of the communication strategy, as agreed with the European Commission.

#### **a) Papers to be produced ahead of a Peer Review:**

- Short presentation of the good practice (or of the planned policy reform) by the host country;
- Thematic expert discussion paper;
- Peer country comment papers;
- Stakeholders comment papers.

The contractor will only be in charge of drafting the thematic expert discussion paper. Other documents will be prepared by participants to the Peer Review but the contractor will be responsible for their coordination and timely dissemination.

#### **b) Papers to be produced following a Peer Review:**

- News article for wider dissemination (web or other) maximum 3000 characters (available one-two weeks after the event);
- Summary (short report) 4 A4 pages maximum (available two weeks after the event);
- Synthesis report (available at the latest two months after the event).

The contractor will be responsible for the drafting of all these documents and ensuring the quality of the documents. They shall be finalised shortly after the event so that the results can feed into subsequent discussions and reports. They shall be made available electronically on the Peer Review website after approval by the Commission. The news article should be made available to peer review participants and others wishing to use it to inform of individual peer reviews.

The reports must be written in an easy-to-read style and the summary, aimed at a larger audience, must be written in a journalistic style. The lay out, illustrations and technical quality of these documents should support the effective dissemination of the results of the peer reviews.

The synthesis report and news article should be translated into English, French, German and the language(s) of the host country.

**c) After completion of each annual programme of Peer Reviews**

- Annual activity report

The contractor will summarise the activities in a document that will include an assessment of the practical arrangements and the methodology(ies) used, with a view to possible adaptation in the following year of the exercise.

- Annual results report

The aim of the annual results report is to document and disseminate innovative policies that are transferable and sustainable, feeding into the Commission work on reporting on the social dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy. This will include the key messages of the Peer Reviews and the lessons learned about the sustainability and transferability of the measures reviewed. The report is to be widely distributed. The annual results report will be presented to the Social Protection Committee and could also be presented at public conferences (e.g. the Annual Convention of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion).

### **5.3. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

In view of the importance of effectively disseminating the lessons learned in the context of both the Peer Review and the Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion to a wide audience, both at European and national level, the contractor should develop and implement a communication strategy. The contractor will be required to cooperate with the contractor for the Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion regarding the communication activities.

The communication strategy should:

- include clear targets and indicators for assessing progress in the dissemination of the peer review programme and the reports by the

Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion (see also 5.3. Quality Control and Assessment).

- identify main measures that will be used to disseminate the results.
- detail how the measures and tools already in place will be developed during the contract, such as development of the website functionality (e.g. RSS feeds, etc) and other communication channels (e.g. social media integration, etc)
- identify main target groups (e.g. relevant authorities on European and national level in the MS and participating countries, stakeholders, etc) for the activities.
- indicate how the quality of drafting and presentation of documents will be ensured.

Decisions about the communication and dissemination activities and will be taken in agreement with the Commission.

#### **5.3.1. WEB SITE**

During the previous years a website has been developed to disseminate information on Peer Reviews and the Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion (<http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu>).

The contractor is requested to host this website at the same address and continue to maintain and develop it in English, German and French with outputs of the activities conducted in the framework of the Peer Reviews and the Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion. The communication activities will also include facilitating the publication on the website of the reports of independent experts in social inclusion (around 2 per year in 23 languages plus 2 synthesis reports in English). This should be done in accordance with the rules set out in the Information Providers Guide (<http://ec.europa.eu/ipg/>)

The website will also contain links to relevant national and Commission websites.

On the site it should be stated clearly that the European Commission is associated to the site, without having responsibilities with regard to the information disseminated.

Technical documentation (content management tool, programme code, user manual, technical design document, etc.), domain and rights will be transferred to the contractor selected. The 'peer-review-social-inclusion.eu' domain will have to be booked for 3 years at the new contractor's expenses. Domain name and rights will have to be transferred to a new contractor or to the Commission at the end of the contract. In order to facilitate a future porting to the EUROPA data centre or to a future contactor, the contractor will document, review or enhance the technical documentation. Any further development of the website should also take into account the technologies and architecture of the EUROPA data centre.

#### **5.3.2. Other**

Bidders are invited to make proposals for other dissemination channels that would be appropriate to give more visibility to the results of the outcomes of the Peer Review Seminars and to allow them to be fully used in policy design.

#### **5.4. QUALITY CONTROL AND ASSESSMENT**

Through the Peer Review Core Teams the contractor will ensure the high quality of the activities undertaken and the reports produced. The contractor is requested to carry out an annual evaluation of the activities focusing on:

- The impact of the Peer Reviews on the national (and/or the sub-national, where appropriate) and the European level assessed through electronic surveys, to be conducted after the Peer Review seminars;
- The organisation of the activities;
- The effectiveness of the communication strategy with regard to the results of the activities carried out in the framework of the contract.

#### **5.5. REQUIREMENTS ON HOW THE TASKS SHALL BE CARRIED OUT**

The PROGRESS Programme aims to promote gender mainstreaming in all its five policy sections and commissioned activities. Consequently, the Contractor shall take the necessary steps to ensure that:

- Gender equality issues are taken into account when relevant for the drafting of the technical offer by paying attention to the situation and needs of women and men;
- Implementation of proposed activities includes a perspective informed by a systematic consideration of the gender dimension;
- Performance monitoring includes the collection and gathering of data disaggregated by sex when needed;
- Its proposed team and/or staff respects the gender balance at all levels.

Equally, needs of disabled people shall be duly acknowledged and met while executing the requested service. This will ensure in particular that where the Contractor organises training sessions and conferences, issues publications or develops dedicated websites, people with disabilities will have equal access to the facilities or the services provided.

Finally, the Contracting Authority encourages the Contractor to promote equal employment opportunities for all its staff and team. This entails that the Contractor is encouraged to foster an appropriate mix of people, whatever their ethnic origin, religion, age, and ability.

The Contractor will be required to detail in its final activity report the steps and achievements made towards meeting these contractual requirements.

#### **6. PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED**

See Annex IV of the draft contract, experts' CVs.

Additional requirements: see paragraph "Selection criteria".



## 7. TIME SCHEDULE AND REPORTING

See Article I.2 and Annex I of the draft contract “Tender Specifications and Monitoring”.

Additional requirements (specific deadlines for the performance of tasks):

- **TIME SCHEDULE**

The contract will have duration of 12 months. It may be renewed 3 times.

- **INTERIM AND FINAL REPORTING**

In addition to the specific reports required by each specific task, as mentioned above,

- an interim report to be submitted during the sixth month of execution of the contract. It shall indicate the state of play of the different activities covered by the contract;
- a final report to be submitted at the end of the contract period.

Both reports should be submitted in English and include, for the time period concerned:

- a complete description of the work done;
- a presentation of the results obtained;
- an assessment of the activities and recommendations to improve management procedures;
- any comments, suggestions or recommendations judged useful or necessary by the Contractor;
- **Additional requirements:**

PROGRESS is implemented through a results-based management (RBM). The Strategic Framework, developed in collaboration with the Member States, social partners and civil society organisations, sets out the intervention logic for PROGRESS-related expenditure and defines PROGRESS' mandate and its long-term and immediate outcomes. It is supplemented by performance measures which serve to determine the extent to which PROGRESS has delivered the expected results. See in Annex the overview of PROGRESS performance measurement framework. For more information on the strategic framework, please visit PROGRESS website <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=659&langId=en>.

The Commission regularly monitors the effect of PROGRESS-supported or commissioned initiatives and considers how they contribute to PROGRESS outcomes as defined in the Strategic Framework. In this context, the Contractor will be asked to dedicatedly work in close cooperation with the Commission and/or persons authorised by it to define the expected contribution and the set of performance measures which this contribution will be assessed against.

The Contractor will be asked to collect and report on its own performance to the Commission and/or persons authorised by it against a template which will be annexed to the contract/service order/. In addition, the Contractor will make available to the Commission and/or persons authorised by it all documents or information that will allow PROGRESS performance measurement to be successfully completed and to give them the necessary rights of access.

## **8. PUBLICATION AND INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS**

In accordance with the General conditions, all contractors are under the obligation to acknowledge that the present service has received funding from the Union in all documents and media produced, in particular final delivered outputs, related reports, brochures, press releases, videos, software, etc, including at conferences or seminars. In the context of the European Union's Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity – PROGRESS, the following formulation shall be used:

*This (publication, conference, training session etc) is commissioned by the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity - PROGRESS (2007-2013).*

*This programme is implemented by the European Commission. It was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment, social affairs and equal opportunities area, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Europe 2020 Strategy goals in these fields.*

*The seven-year Programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA-EEA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.*

*For more information see: <http://ec.europa.eu/progress>*

For publications it is also necessary to include the following reference: "The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission".

With regard to publication and any communication plan linked to the present activity, the Contractor will insert the European Union logo and mention the European Commission as the Contracting Authority in every publication or related material developed under the present contract.

## **9. PAYMENTS AND STANDARD CONTRACT**

According to Article I.4 and Article II.4 of the draft contract:

*"Payments under the Contract shall be made in accordance with Article II.4 [of the draft contract]. Payments shall be executed only if the Contractor has fulfilled all his contractual obligations by the date on which the invoice is submitted. Payment requests may not be made if payments for previous periods have not been executed as a result of default of negligence on the part of the Contractor.*

- ***Performance guarantee***

Not applicable.

In drawing up the bid, the tenderer should take into account the provisions of the standard contract comprising the "General terms and conditions applicable to service contracts".

## 10. PRICES

*Under the terms of Articles 3 and 4 of the Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the European Communities, the latter are exempt from all charges, taxes and duties, including value added tax; such charges may not therefore be included in the calculation of the price quoted. The amount of VAT is to be indicated separately.*

*The price must be stated in EUR(€), net of VAT (using, where appropriate, the conversion rates published in the C series of the Official Journal of the European Union on the day when the invitation to tender was issued), and broken down according to the model in Annex III included in the attached standard contract.*

The maximum amount available for this contract is €800.000.

Bidders should note that any bids exceeding this limit will not be considered.

*The financial offer must cover one year and be presented in a way that allows identification of the nature and details of costs (number of items, unit prices etc).*

- **Professional fees and direct costs**
  - Fees, expressed as the number of person-days multiplied by the unit price per working day for each expert proposed (including the days of participation in meetings / seminars).
  - Direct costs include
    - Travel expenses of the contractor's staff;
    - Travel and subsistence costs for participants in Peer Reviews;
    - Reporting expenses;
    - Translation and printing;
    - Shipping of documents;
    - Documentation;
    - Development and updating of the Website;
    - Costs related to quality control and assessment;
    - Any unavoidable expenses necessary to the achievement of the Contract.

## 11. COMPOSITION OF A PARTNERSHIP OR CONSORTIUM

Tenders can be submitted by groupings of service providers/suppliers who will not be required to adopt a particular legal form prior to the contract being

awarded, but may be required to do so after the award if this formulation is necessary for the good execution of the contract<sup>11</sup>.

However, a grouping of firms must nominate one party to be responsible for the receipt and processing of payments for members of the grouping, for managing the service administration, and for coordination. The documents required and listed in the following paragraphs "Exclusion criteria and supporting documents" and "Selection criteria" must be supplied by every member of the grouping.

Each member of the grouping assumes a joint and several liability towards the Commission.

## 12. EXCLUSION CRITERIA AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

### 1) Bidders must provide a declaration on their honour, duly signed and dated, that they are not in one of the situations referred to in Article 93 and 94 a) of the Financial Regulation

Those articles are as follows:

*Article 93:*

*Applicants or tenderers shall be excluded if:*

- a) *they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;*
- b) *they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgement which has the force of res judicata;*
- c) *they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify;*
- d) *they have not fulfilled their obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;*
- e) *they have been the subject of a judgement which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities' financial interests;*

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<sup>11</sup> The contract has to be signed by all members of the group, or by one of the members, which has been duly authorised by the other members of the grouping (a power of attorney or sufficient authorisation is to be attached to the contract), when the tenderers have not formed a legal entity. The contract has to be signed by all members of the group, or by one of the members, which has been duly authorised by the other members of the grouping (a power of attorney or sufficient authorisation is to be attached to the contract), when the tenderers have not formed a legal entity

- f) *they are currently subject to an administrative penalty referred to in Article 96(1)*<sup>12</sup>.

Article 94:

Contracts may not be awarded to candidates or tenderers who, during the procurement procedure:

- a) *are subject to a conflict of interest.*  
b) *are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the contracting authority as a condition of participation in the procurement procedure or fail to supply this information;(...)"*

- 2) The tenderer to whom the contract is to be awarded shall provide, within a time limit defined by the contracting authority and preceding the signature of the contract, the evidence referred to in Article 134 of the implementing Rules<sup>13</sup>, confirming the declaration referred to in point 12.1) above**

*Article 134 of the Implementation Rules - Evidence*

*§3. The contracting authority shall accept as satisfactory evidence that the candidate or tenderer to whom the contract is to be awarded is not in one of the situations described in point (a), (b) or (e) of Article 93(1) of the Financial Regulation, a recent extract from the judicial record or, failing that, an equivalent document recently issued by a judicial or administrative authority in the country of origin or provenance showing that those requirements are satisfied. The contracting authority shall accept, as satisfactory evidence that the candidate or tenderer is not in the situation described in point (d) of Article 93(1) of the Financial Regulation, a recent certificate issued by the competent authority of the State concerned.*

*Where the document or certificate is not issued in the country concerned, it may be replaced by a sworn or, failing that, a solemn statement made by the interested party before a judicial or administrative authority, a notary or a qualified professional body in his country of origin or provenance.*

*§4. Depending on the national legislation of the country in which the candidate or tenderer is established, the documents referred to in paragraph 3 shall relate to legal persons and/or natural persons including, where considered necessary by the contracting authority, company directors or any person with powers of representation, decision-making or control in relation to the candidate or tenderer*

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<sup>12</sup> Article 96(1): The contracting authority may impose administrative or financial penalties on the following:

- (a) candidates or tenderers in the cases referred to in point (b) of Article 94;  
(b) contractors who have been declared to be in serious breach of their obligations under contracts covered by the budget.  
(...)"

<sup>13</sup> Commission Regulation n° 2342/2002 (EC, Euratom) laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities - Official Journal L 357 of 31/12/2002

**See Annex I (which may be used as a checklist) for the supporting documents accepted by the European Commission to be provided by applicants, tenderers or bidders to who the contract will be awarded..**

- **The contracting authority may waive the obligation of a candidate or tenderer to submit the documentary evidence referred to in Article 134 of the Implementing Rules,, if such evidence has already been submitted to it for the purposes of another procurement procedure launched by DG EMPL and provided that the issuing date of the documents does not exceed one year and that they are still valid.**

**In such a case, the candidate or tenderer shall declare on his honour that the documentary evidence has already been provided in a previous procurement procedure and confirm that no changes in his situation have occurred.**

### **13. SELECTION CRITERIA**

The candidates will be selected on the basis of their financial and economic capacity and their technical capacity.

- **ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CAPACITY**

Tenderers must provide sufficient information to satisfy the Commission of their financial standing and more particularly that they have the necessary resources and financial means to carry out the work that is the subject of the tender and that the tenderer is viable for the duration of the contract.

The following documents should be provided:

- a) Proof of turnover of the last financial year at least equivalent to 100% of the price of the contract;
- b) Full set of financial statements (comprising at least a balance sheet and profit and loss account) for the last two financial years, where the tenderer is required by law to produce such statements. Where the relevant company law requires these financial statements to be audited, the audit's statement should be included. Where the tenderer is not required to produce full financial statements, other documents establishing financial capacity should be submitted (eg internal reports, management accounts, appropriate bankers' statements, evidence of professional risks indemnity insurance etc).

If, for some exceptional reason which the contracting authority considers justified, the tenderer or candidate is unable to provide the references requested by the contracting authority, he may prove his economic and financial capacity by any other means which the contracting authority considers appropriate.

- **TECHNICAL CAPACITY:**

- The Project Director should be a Category I expert, as outlined in Annex IV of the draft contract, experts' CVs.
- The senior members of the the Core Team should be at least Category II experts.
- The Project Director and senior members of the Core Team should have proven experience in the field of social inclusion and social protection, including in depth knowledge of the EU social inclusion process. They should also have a proven track record in managing similar activities, organisational capacity, good analytical and drafting capacity.
- The Core Team should demonstrate solid linguistic capability covering at least the three working languages of the Commission (English, German, French).

Means of proof required:

- Details of educational and professional qualifications (CVs) of the Project Director and of the members of the core team.
- A list of the works carried out by the organisation in the last five years.

Please note that CVs should not exceed two pages it is recommended that they use the presentation of the Europass CV [http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/preview.action?locale\\_id=1](http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/preview.action?locale_id=1)

#### **14. AWARD CRITERIA**

The contract will be awarded to the bid offering the best quality/price ratio, taking account of the following criteria:

- a) Quality and consistency of the tender
  - The degree of understanding of the nature of the assignment, its context and results to be achieved (20 %);
- b) Quality of the bid and the proposed methodological approach
  - Quality of the bid and of the methodology proposed for organising the work efficiently, in particular the administrative and logistical tasks involved in the organisation of the Peer Reviews, the preparation of various outputs and the ability to ensure high quality outputs (45%);
  - Quality of the communication strategy proposed (10%);
  - Human resources mobilised to carry out the different stages of the work, structure of the team(s) and allocation to tasks, and ability to complete the work well within the time available (25%).

It should be noted that the contract will *not* be awarded to a tenderer who receives less than 70% on the Award Criteria.

The points total will then be divided by the price, with the highest-scoring bid being chosen.

## **15. CONTENT AND PRESENTATION OF THE BIDS**

### **15.1. Content of bids**

The bid must include:

- all information and documents necessary to enable the Commission to appraise the bid on the basis of the exclusion, selection and award criteria (see points 12, 13 and 14 above);
- a bank ID form duly completed and signed by the bank;
- a "legal entity" form duly completed;
- the price (the financial offer must be signed);
- the detailed CVs of the Core Team;
- the name and function of the contractor's legal representative (i.e. the person authorised to act on behalf of the contractor in any legal dealings with third parties);
- proof of eligibility: tenderers must indicate the State in which they have their registered office or are established, providing the necessary supporting documents in accordance with their national law

### **15.2. Presentation of the bid**

Bids must be submitted in triplicate (i.e. one original, two copies and an electronic copy of the technical part of the bid (CD rom)).

They must include all the information required by the Commission.

They must be clear and concise.

They must be signed by the legal representative.

They must be submitted in accordance with the specific requirements of the invitation to tender, within the deadlines laid down.

## **16. VALIDITY OF THE TENDER**

Tenders must be valid for up to 8 months after submission.

Annex 1



# OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

**PROGRESS Ultimate Outcome**  
*Member States implement laws, policies and practices in a manner that contributes to the desired outcomes of the Social Agenda*

PROGRESS works towards its ultimate outcome by helping strengthen the EU's support for Member States' efforts to create more and better jobs and to build a more cohesive society. PROGRESS seeks to contribute to (i) an **effective legal regime** in the EU in relation to the Social Agenda; (ii) **shared understanding** across the EU with regard to Social Agenda objectives; and (iii) **strong partnerships** working towards Social Agenda objectives.

In operational terms, support provided by PROGRESS facilitates (i) provision of analysis and policy advice; (ii) monitoring and reporting on the implementation of EU legislation and policies; (iii) policy transfer, learning and support among Member States; and (iv) relaying to decision-makers the views of the stakeholders and society at large.

**Legal Regime**

**Outcome:**  
*Compliance in Member States with EU law related to PROGRESS areas.*

**Performance Indicators**

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1. Transposition rate of EU law on matters related to PROGRESS policy areas
2. Effectiveness of application in Member States of EU law on matters related to PROGRESS policy areas.
3. EU policies and legislation are grounded in thorough analysis of situation and responsive to conditions, needs and expectations in Member States in PROGRESS areas
4. Extent to which PROGRESS-supported policy advice feeds into the development and implementation of EU legislation and policies
5. Cross-cutting issues are addressed in PROGRESS policy sections
6. EU policies and legislation display a common underlying logic of intervention in relation to PROGRESS issues
7. Gender mainstreaming is systematically promoted in PROGRESS

**Shared Understanding**

**Outcome:**  
*Shared understanding and ownership among policy/decision-makers and stakeholders in Member States, and the Commission, of objectives related to PROGRESS policy areas.*

**Performance Indicators**

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1. Attitudes of decision-makers, key stakeholders and general public regarding EU objectives in PROGRESS policy areas
2. Extent to which national policy discourses or priorities reflect EU objectives
3. Extent to which principles of good governance (including minimum standards on consultation) are respected in policy debate
4. Extent to which the outcomes of policy debates feed into the development of EU law and policy.
5. Greater awareness of policy-and decision-makers, social partners, NGOs, networks regarding their rights/obligations in relation to PROGRESS policy areas
6. Greater awareness of policy-and decision-makers, social partners, NGOs, networks regarding EU objectives and policies in relation to PROGRESS policy areas

**Strong Partnerships**

**Outcome:**  
*Effective partnerships with national and pan-European stakeholders in support of outcomes related to PROGRESS policy areas.*

**Performance Indicators**

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1. Existence of common ground/consensus among policy and decision-makers and stakeholders on EU objectives and policies
2. Identification and involvement by the EU of key actors in a position to exert influence or change at EU and national levels
3. Effectiveness of partnerships in relation to outcomes related to PROGRESS policy areas.
4. Number of individuals served or reached by network supported by PROGRESS.
5. Extent to which advocacy skills of PROGRESS-supported networks have improved
6. Satisfaction of EU and national authorities with the contribution of networks
7. Extent to which PROGRESS-supported networks take a cross-cutting approach

## Annex I

Exclusion criteria (Article 93(1) FR)	Supporting documents to be provided by applicants, tenderers or bidders (Article 134 IR)	
<p><b>1. Exclusion from a procurement procedure, Article 93(1) FR :</b></p> <p><i>« Candidates or tenderers shall be excluded from participation in a procurement procedure if:</i></p>		
<p><b>1.1. (subparagraph a)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>they are bankrupt or being wound up,</i></li> <li>▪ <i>are having their affairs administered by the courts,</i></li> <li>▪ <i>have entered into an arrangement with creditors</i></li> <li>▪ <i>have suspended business activities,</i></li> <li>▪ <i>are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters,</i></li> <li>▪ <i>or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations<sup>14</sup>;</i></li> </ul>	<p>Recent extract from the judicial record</p> <p><b>or</b></p> <p>recent equivalent document issued by a judicial or administrative authority in the country of origin or provenance</p> <p><b>or</b></p> <p>Where no such certificate is issued in the country concerned : sworn or, failing that, a solemn statement made by the interested party before a judicial or administrative authority, a notary or a qualified professional body in his country of origin or provenance</p>	
<p><b>1.2. (subparagraph b)</b></p> <p><i>they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata<sup>15</sup>;</i></p>	<p>Cf. supporting documents for Article 93(1)(a) FR above</p>	

<sup>14</sup> See also Article 134(3) IR : Depending on the national legislation of the country in which the tenderer or candidate is established, the documents referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 shall relate to legal persons and/or natural persons including, where considered necessary by the contracting authority, company directors or any person with powers of representation, decision-making or control in relation to the candidate or tenderer.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. footnote n° 1.

<b>Exclusion criteria (Article 93(1) FR)</b>	<b>Supporting documents to be provided by applicants, tenderers or bidders (Article 134 IR)</b>	
<b>1.3. (subparagraph c)</b>  <i>they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify;</i>	Declaration by the candidate or tenderer that he is not in the situation described	
<b>1.4. (subparagraph d)</b>  <i>they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed<sup>16</sup>;</i>	Recent certificate issued by the competent authority of the State concerned confirming that the candidate is not in the situation described  <b>or</b>  Where no such certificate is issued in the country concerned : sworn or, failing that, a solemn statement made by the interested party before a judicial or administrative authority, a notary or a qualified professional body in his country of origin or provenance	
<b>1.5. (subparagraph e)</b>  <i>they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities' financial interests<sup>17</sup>;</i>	Cf. supporting documents for Article 93(1)(a) FR above	
<b>1.6. (subparagraph f)</b>  <i>They are currently subject to an administrative penalty referred to in article 96(1)</i>	Declaration by the candidate or tenderer that he is not in the situation described	

<sup>16</sup> Cf. footnote n° 1.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. footnote n° 1.

<b>Exclusion criteria</b> <b>(Article 94 FR)</b>	<b>Supporting documents to be provided by applicants, tenderers or bidders</b> <b>(Article 134 IR)</b>	
<b>2. Exclusion from a procurement or grant award procedure Article 94 FR :</b> « <i>Contracts may not be awarded to candidates or tenderers who, during the procurement procedure:</i>		
<b>2.1. (subparagraph a)</b> <i>are subject to a conflict of interest;</i>	Statement by the applicant, tenderer or bidder confirming the absence of conflict of interests, to be submitted with the application, bid or proposal	-
<b>2.2. (subparagraph b)</b> <i>are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the contracting authority as a condition of participation in the contract procedure or fail to supply this information»<sup>18</sup>.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No specific supporting documents to be supplied by the applicant, tenderer or bidder</li> <li>- It is the responsibility of the authorising officer, represented by the evaluation committee, to check that the information submitted is complete<sup>19</sup> and to identify any misrepresentation</li> </ul>	-

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Article 146(3) of the FR Implementing Rules: « ...the evaluation committee may ask candidates or tenderers to supply additional material or to clarify the supporting documents submitted in connection with the exclusion and selection criteria, within a specified time-limit. » and Article 178(2) of the FR Implementing Rules: « The evaluation committee may ask an applicant to provide additional proof or to clarify the supporting documents establishing financial and operational capacity, within a specified time-limit. »

<sup>19</sup> Cf. footnote n°1