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CALL FOR TENDERS

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Online news and information service for emerging markets

TENDER SPECIFICATIONS

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1. INFORMATION ON TENDERING

1.1. Participation

Participation in this tender procedure 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 Union in the field of public procurement on the conditions laid down in that agreement. Where the Multilateral Agreement on Government Procurement* concluded within the WTO applies, the participation to the call for tender is also open to nationals of the countries that have ratified this Agreement, on the conditions it lays down.

1.2. Contractual conditions

The tenderer should bear in mind the provisions of the draft contract which specifies the rights and obligations of the contractor, particularly those on payments, performance of the contract, confidentiality, and checks and audits.

1.3. Joint tenders

A joint tender is a situation where a tender is submitted by a group of economic operators (consortium). Joint tenders may include subcontractors in addition to the joint tenderers.

In case of joint tender, all economic operators in a joint tender assume joint and several liability towards the Contracting Authority for the performance of the contract as a whole. Nevertheless, tenderers must designate a single point of contact for the Contracting Authority.

After the award, the Contracting Authority will sign the contract either with all members of the group, or with the member duly authorised by the other members via a power of attorney.

1.4. Subcontracting

Subcontracting is permitted in the tender but the contractor will retain full liability towards the Contracting Authority for performance of the contract as a whole.

Tenderers must give an indication of the proportion of the contract that they intend to subcontract.

Tenderers are required to identify all subcontractors whose share of the contract is above 20%.

During contract execution, the change of any subcontractor identified in the tender will be subject to prior written approval of the Contracting Authority.

* See http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/gproc_e/gp_gpa_e.htm

1.5. Content of the tender

The tenders must be presented as follows:

Part A: Identification of the tenderer (see below)

Part B: Evidence for exclusion criteria (see section 2.2)

Part C: Evidence for selection criteria (see section 2.3)

Part D: Financial offer (see section 2.5)

Part E: Technical offer (see section 3)

1.6. Identification of the tenderer: legal capacity and status

The tender must include a cover letter presenting the name of the tenderer (including all entities in case of joint offer) and identified subcontractors if applicable, and the name of the single contact person in relation to this tender.

If applicable, the cover letter must indicate the proportion of the contract to be subcontracted.

In case of joint tender, the cover letter must be signed by a duly authorised representative for each tenderer, or by a single tenderer duly authorised by other tenderers (with power of attorney).

Subcontractors must provide a letter of intent stating their willingness to provide the service foreseen in the offer and in line with the present tender specification.

In order to prove their legal capacity and their status, all tenderers must provide a signed Legal Entity Form with its supporting evidence. The form is available on:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm

Tenderers that are already registered in the Contracting Authority's accounting system (i.e. they have already been direct contractors) must provide the Legal Entity Form form but are not obliged to provide the supporting evidence.

The tenderer (or the single point of contact in case of joint tender) must provide a Financial Identification Form and supporting documents. Only one form per offer should be submitted (no form is needed for subcontractors and other joint tenderers). The form is available on: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/index_en.cfm

Tenderers must provide the following information if it has not been included with the Legal Entity Form:

- For legal persons, a legible copy of the notice of appointment of the persons authorised to represent the tenderer in dealings with third parties and in legal proceedings, or a copy of the publication of such appointment if the legislation which applies to the legal entity concerned requires such publication. Any delegation of this authorisation to another representative not indicated in the official appointment must be evidenced.
- For natural persons, where applicable, a proof of registration on a professional or trade register or any other official document showing the registration number.

2. EVALUATION AND AWARD

2.1. Evaluation steps

The evaluation is based on the information provided in the submitted tender. It takes place in three steps:

- (1) Verification of non-exclusion of tenderers on the basis of the exclusion criteria
- (2) Selection of tenderers on the basis of selection criteria
- (3) Evaluation of tenders on the basis of the award criteria (technical and financial evaluation)

Only tenders meeting the requirements of one step will pass on to the next step.

2.2. Exclusion criteria

All tenderers shall provide a declaration on their honour (see Annex II), duly signed and dated by an authorised representative, stating that they are not in one of the situations of exclusion listed in the Annex II.

The declaration on honour is also required for identified subcontractors whose intended share of the contract is above 20%.

The successful tenderer shall provide the documents mentioned as supporting evidence in Annex II before signature of the contract and within a deadline given by the contracting authority. This requirement applies to all members of the consortium in case of joint tender and to identified subcontractors whose intended share of the contract is above 20%.

2.3. Selection criteria

Tenderers must prove their economic, financial, technical and professional capacity to carry out the work subject to this call for tender.

The evidence requested should be provided by each member of the group in case of joint tender and identified subcontractor whose intended share of the contract is above 20%. However a consolidated assessment will be made to verify compliance with the minimum capacity levels.

The tenderer may rely on the capacities of other entities, regardless of the legal nature of the links which it has with them. It must in that case prove to the Contracting Authority that it will have at its disposal the resources necessary for performance of the contract, for example by producing an undertaking on the part of those entities to place those resources at its disposal.

2.3.1. Economic and financial capacity criteria and evidence

In order to prove their economic and financial capacity, the tenderer (i.e. in case of joint tender, the combined capacity of all members of the consortium and identified subcontractors) must comply with the following criteria:

- Turnover of the last two financial years above EUR 300,000.

The following evidence should be provided:

- Copy of the profit & loss account and balance sheet for the last two years for which accounts have been closed,
- Failing that, appropriate statements from banks,
- If applicable, evidence of professional risk indemnity insurance;

If, for some exceptional reason which the Contracting Authority considers justified, a tenderer is unable to provide one or other of the above documents, he or she may prove his or her economic and financial capacity by any other document which the Contracting Authority considers appropriate. In any case, the Contracting Authority must at least be notified of the exceptional reason and its justification in the tender. The Commission reserves the right to request any other document enabling it to verify the tenderer's economic and financial capacity.

2.3.2. Technical and professional capacity criteria and evidence

Tenderers (in case of a joint tender the combined capacity of all tenderers and identified subcontractors) must comply with the following criteria:

- Minimum geographical coverage: At least three quarters of each group of countries listed in Part 3 point 3.4 with proven experience in this type of service in the last three years.
- The tenderer must prove capacity to deliver content in English.

Evidence:

The following evidence should be provided to fulfil the above criteria:

- List of relevant services provided in the past three years, with sums, dates and recipients, public or private.
- Sample of information for at least two countries for each of the five geographical areas listed in Part 3 point 3.4 which are covered by the service provider or access to their online service to allow the evaluation committee to assess the evidence.

2.4. Award criteria

The tender will be awarded according to the best-value-for -money procedure. The quality of the tender will be evaluated based on the following criteria. The maximum total quality score is 100 points.

<u>Geographical coverage:</u> <i>Availability of countries indicated in Part3 “Technical description”, point 3.4 “Coverage”.</i>	<i>30 points</i>
<u>News and alert service:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Availability and frequency of information releases and updates (20 points)– Quality, diversity and accessibility to the references/sources (20 points)– Usefulness (10)	<i>50 points</i>
<u>Interface:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Key word searching capability– Customization: <i>possibility of definition of content by the user</i>– User friendliness	<i>20 points</i>

Tenders must score above 50% in total. Tenders that do not reach the minimum quality thresholds will be rejected and will not be ranked.

After evaluation of the quality of the tender, the tenders are ranked using the formula below to determine the tender offering best value for money. A weight of 60/40 is given to quality and price.

$$\text{Score for tender X} = (\text{cheapest price} / \text{price of tender X} * 40) + (\text{total quality score (out of 100)} / 100 * 60)$$

The technical offer must cover all aspects and tasks required in the technical specification and provide all the information needed to apply the award criteria. Offers deviating from the requirements or not covering all requirements may be excluded on the basis of non-conformity with the tender specifications and will not be evaluated.

2.5. Financial offer

The price for the tender must be quoted in euro. Tenderers from countries outside the euro zone have to quote their prices in euro. The price quoted may not be revised in line with exchange rate movements. It is for the tenderer to assume the risks or the benefits deriving from any variation.

Prices must be quoted free of all duties, taxes and other charges, including VAT, as the European Union is exempt from such charges under Articles 3 and 4 of the Protocol on the privileges and immunities of the European Union. The amount of VAT may be shown separately.

3. TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

3.1. General background

The Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs, provides high-level analysis and policy advice to the Commission and its services on international economic and financial questions, Within the Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs, several units have specific needs for economic and financial information related to their particular geographical coverage. This is a major issue, notably in the case of those units dealing with new EU Member States. The main missions for them are to enhance the economic performance of the Union through surveillance of the Member States economies. This objective follows directly from the Commission's responsibilities under the economic and monetary policy title of the Treaty and also from secondary legislation, especially the Stability and Growth Pact.

In the case of those units dealing with emerging economies, the financial dimension of EU external policies also includes the preparation of candidate countries for accession to the EU, fostering economic prosperity and stability in the Western Balkan countries, the Mediterranean countries, Russia and the New Independent States (NIS), and reinforcing the economic and financial dimension of EU external policies by pursuing economic analysis and policy advice in the field of globalisation, development and debt strategy, and the major economies in America and Asia, as well as trade issues.

To attain these objectives Commission staff has access to a range of online news and information providers. However, as some user requirements relating to emerging markets are quite specific, accurate and detailed economic and financial information for these markets covered by readily accessible online information becomes an essential tool.

3.2. General and specific objectives

The aim of the present call for tender is to provide the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs with online economic and financial news and information services for emerging markets. The information timely provided will include news, company and industry information, financial markets data and macroeconomic analysis (*e.g. Country reports, country sector reports, news articles, company information, industry analyses, financial markets, macroeconomic analysis, market specific information, etc.*) on a geographical basis.

3.3. Tasks, final output and deliverable, and details on deliverables

Contractors should provide online access to service to the staff (approximately 120 members of staff) of the Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs.

Contractors should offer information in English.

The delivery method is the choice of the tender applicant. Some examples of possible delivery methods are:

- Email delivery of alerts service. These emails should be sent to each user individually, according to their own preferences and countries selected by the user.
- News service internet webpage, covering periodical reports (daily, weekly, monthly, etc.) It should be accessible by each user independently. Other solutions, as a site license are also welcome.
- Other suitable alternatives proposed by the tenderer.

3.4. Coverage

The services should cover the following geographical areas:

- New Member States and Acceding countries from Central and Eastern Europe
(*Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland and Croatia*)
- EU Candidate countries and Western Balkans.
(*Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo^{*}, and Turkey*)
- Russia and the New Independent States
(*Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan*)
- Mediterranean and Gulf countries
(*Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt, Sudan, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Gulf Cooperation Council and Yemen*)
- Other important emerging countries
(*Brazil, India, China, South Africa*)

3.5. General delivery time and progress meetings foreseen with the Contracting Authority

Contractor should provide information on availability and frequency of information releases and updates for each country or group of countries covered.

3.6. Intellectual property rights (see annex, draft service contract)

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.