GENERAL INVITATION TO TENDER
No ECFIN 2014 008/A4
Open procedure

EU-wide monthly business survey in the financial services sector

TENDER SPECIFICATIONS

These specifications follow the publication of the contract notice in OJEU 2014/S 154-275797 – 13.08.2014

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PART I. TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

1. NATURE AND SUBJECT OF THE CONTRACT

With the purpose of conducting an ‘EU-wide monthly business survey in the financial services sector’, the European Commission (Contracting Authority), Directorate General Economic and Financial Affairs (DG ECFIN) wishes **to conclude a service contract for the provision of 12 monthly surveys and two half-yearly evaluation reports.**

The service contract is automatically renewable every twelve months up to three times under the conditions stipulated under point 5.2.

Following the call for tenders, **a single contractor** will be selected.

2. BACKGROUND

The ‘EU-wide monthly business survey in the financial services sector’ is part of the Joint Harmonised European Union Programme of Business and Consumer Surveys (BCS). The BCS programme was set up based on the Commission's institutional prerogatives and constitutes an important source for decision making of EU economic policy makers. The programme was initiated by a Commission decision in November 1961 and was modified through subsequent Council and Commission decisions. It was last approved through Commission decision C(97) 2241 of 15 July 1997 and presented in Commission communication COM(2006) 379 of 12 July 2006.

3. OBJECTIVES

The programme is designed to gather information on the state of the economies in the EU Member States, in order to be able to compare their business cycles for EMU (Economic and Monetary Union) management purposes. It has become an indispensable tool in the EMU economic surveillance process, as well as for general economic policy purposes.

Given the importance of the financial services sector for the development of the overall economy, the Commission contracted a pilot survey in the financial services sector on an EU-wide scale for a period of one year (ending in March 2007). After a positive assessment of the first results, the Commission decided to continue the survey. Currently, a new call for tender is being launched for another period of maximum four years (April 2015 – March 2019*)*.

The survey has to be carried out on a monthly basis and the Commission intends to publish the survey results within its regular publication programme of business and consumer survey data.

Apart from the transmission of the monthly survey results, evaluation reports will be required on a regular basis (see details under points 4 and 5).

4. CONTENT

4.1. TASKS TO BE PERFORMED BY THE CONTRACTOR AND MONITORING BY THE COMMISSION

The contractor will perform the requested tasks working in close cooperation with the relevant Commission department, DG ECFIN’s unit ‘Economic situation, forecasts, business and consumer surveys’. Without being exhaustive the tasks to be performed by the contractor are as follows:

- to set-up the necessary infrastructure for conducting the survey;

- to attend the kick-off meeting in Brussels;
- to conduct the survey;
- to deliver the statistical data in accordance with these specifications in a timely manner;
- to report in a timely manner;
- to implement any agreed adjustment to the survey.

The survey should be carried out on a monthly basis and target senior managers in the divisions 64, 65, and 66 of the Classification of Economic Activities in the European Union (section K of NACE Rev. 2). In order to achieve representative results for the euro area and the EU as a whole, the survey should be conducted in a sufficient number of EU Member States covering at least the following countries: Germany, Spain, France, Luxembourg, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Austria, Sweden, Poland, and Czech Republic. The bulk of the field work should be carried out during the first half of each month.

The target for the average number of completed questionnaires is 500 per month.

The questionnaire to be used in the survey is presented in **Annex 3 of the Tender specifications**. It consists of two parts:

- the first part of the questionnaire should be repeated every month and contains five questions which are related to the business situation, demand and employment;
- the second part of the questionnaire contains questions that are asked on a quarterly basis in the first month of each quarter: January, April, July, September.

In the framework of the regular evaluation reports (see point 4.2.2), the results should be analysed also with a view to propose modifications to the wording of the questionnaire, if deemed necessary. The proposed modifications should be implemented following agreement with the Commission. The Commission may also, after common agreement with the contractor modify the questionnaire.

The questionnaire will be in English (**Annex 3**). The contractor is allowed to provide the respondents with a translation of the questionnaire in addition to the English version to facilitate the understanding of the questions and to achieve high response rates. To permit the comparability of survey results across countries and the computation of meaningful aggregates at the EU and euro-area level, it is vital that questionnaires in national languages be as literal as possible translations of the original harmonised EU BCS questionnaire. Deviations are only justifiable for strictly idiomatic reasons. When presenting the tender, the contractor enjoys a certain freedom with regard to the methodological aspects of the survey including sample design, survey mode, sample size per country and division, coverage rate, etc. However, tenderers are encouraged to follow the list of best practices for the conduct of business and consumer surveys developed by the Commission[1], available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/db_indicators/surveys/documents/bcs_best_practice_en.pdf

Concerning sample sizes per country, at least 50 completed questionnaires are required for each of the largest five of the aforementioned countries (Germany, France, Italy, Spain, UK). The

[1] The list builds on the earlier international guidelines on data collection and survey design developed by the Commission and the OECD in cooperation with national survey institutes. These guidelines, together with general methodological considerations, can be found in the European Commission special report No 5/2006 on the Joint Harmonised EU Programme of Business and Consumer Surveys, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/db_indicators/surveys/documents/studies/ee_bcs_2006_05_en.pdf.

allocation of the sample size by divisions of NACE Rev. 2 (64, 65, 66) should take due account of the economic importance of the individual divisions.

The contractor will **provide full details on the methodological aspects of the survey** and possible follow-up actions. In particular, the contractor shall provide full details on:

- the way the sample is designed (universe, stratifications, etc...);
- interview mode(s);
- quality checks, treatment of non-responses;
- the methodology applied for the set-up of a weighting scheme with a view to producing representative aggregated results for the euro area and the EU as a whole;
- the proposed approach concerning follow-up actions to raise and sustain high response rates.

As for other EU business survey data, the Commission intends to seasonally adjust the gross results, provided the required minimum length of time series has been achieved. The contractor, in close cooperation with the Commission, shall contribute to the production of seasonally adjusted survey data.

4.2. DELIVERABLES

During the implementation of the contract, the following deliverables shall be submitted by the contractor. Each deliverable will be examined by the Commission, which may ask for complementary information or propose adjustments in order to redirect the work when necessary.

4.2.1. Monthly transmission of the survey results

The contractor should send the results of the survey in the form of aggregates for each of the three sectors (e.g. sectors 64, 65 and 66 - section K of NACE Rev.2) for each country, the Euro Area (EA) and the EU as a whole in accordance with the templates set out in **Annex 4a** and the technical modalities in **Annex 5.** The country-specific weights for calculating the euro area and EU aggregates should be agreed with the Commission.

The data covering the 12 months' period April [*year n*] to March [*year n+1*] should be made available electronically and, as a general rule, e-mailed at least 4 working days before the end of the current month in accordance with the detailed timetable, which will be attached to the contract and respective renewed contract.

For analytical purposes, the Commission may request to receive the individual results, i.e. the results per questionnaire, in anonymous form together with the weights necessary to calculate the aggregate results per country and sector in accordance with the sampling method chosen. For this purpose, the contractor should send the data in accordance with the templates set out in **Annex 4b** and the technical modalities in **Annex 5.**

4.2.2. Evaluation reports to be submitted

At half-yearly intervals, the contractor shall submit the required evaluation reports in accordance with the modalities set out below and in accordance with the conditions of the draft service contract (see part IV), more specifically:

4.2.2.1. Interim report

After the completion of six monthly surveys, the contractor will submit an interim report in English **at the latest by 15th October [*year n*]** containing an analysis of the results for the surveys for the six months' period **April [*year n*] - September [*year n*]** and a description of the methodology used. In particular, the report should contain information on the number of firms interviewed by sector in each country. Moreover, the report should present an analysis of the reliability of the results (influence of firm size, response rate, representativeness, etc.).

If appropriate and based on the experience during the first six months, the interim report should contain recommendations for changes in the questionnaires and/or in the methodological set-up. The Commission may, based on its own analysis of the results and after discussion with the contractor, propose changes in the questionnaire. Such changes, which should not increase the overall number of questions, should be considered binding for the contractor.

The Commission will inform the contractor in writing whether it accepts the interim report or send its comments within 30 calendar days. The contractor shall have 30 calendar days in which to submit an amended interim report.

4.2.2.2. Final annual report

After the completion of 12 monthly surveys, the contractor will submit a final annual evaluation report in English **at the latest by 30th April [*year n+1*]** containing an analysis of the results of the surveys for the twelve months' period **April [*year n*] – March [*year n+1*]**. This report should also include a more detailed presentation of the work carried out and the methodology used. If appropriate and based on the experience gathered during the survey, the annual report should contain recommendations for changes in the questionnaires and/or the methodological set-up. The final annual report shall also include a comparison of the survey results with other quantitative and qualitative statistics. Such a benchmark analysis might provide further evidence for the scope, the reliability and the overall quality of the survey results.

The Commission will inform the contractor in writing whether it accepts the final annual report or send its comments within 30 calendar days. The contractor shall have 30 calendar days in which to submit an amended final annual report.

4.2.2.3. Submission of reports

The reports will be sent first for approval in .doc or .pdf format (or equivalent) to the following electronic address: ECFIN-BCS-FINA@EC.EUROPA.EU

One paper copy of the accepted version of the evaluation reports must be submitted within 30 days to DG ECFIN’s “Economic situation, forecasts, business and consumer surveys” unit.

4.3. DOCUMENTATION FOR TENDERERS

The following **studies** contracted by the European Commission can be consulted:

- Business Surveys in the Financial Sector – July 2002

  Daniel Bloesch, Richard Etter – ETH KOF

  http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/db_indicators/surveys/documents/studies/eth_kof_ecfin_2001_final_report.pdf

- Feasibility of EU Business Survey in the Financial Services Sector – Nov. 2004

  Daniel Bloesch, Richard Etter – ETH KOF

  http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/db_indicators/surveys/documents/studies/eth_kof_ecfin_2003_final_report.pdf

- The Joint Harmonised EU Programme of Business and Consumer Surveys User Guide contains detailed explanations on the methodology used and can be downloaded from http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/db_indicators/surveys/method_guides/index_en.htm

- Business Tendency surveys: A Hand book

  http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/61/31837055.pdf

- European Central Bank, A Bank Lending Survey for the euro area, Monthly Bulletin, April 2003, pp. 65-75

  (http://www.ecb.int/pub/pdf/mobu/mb200304en.pdf)

5. INDICATIVE TABLE FOR THE WORK, DELIVERABLES, RENEWAL OF THE CONTRACT

5.1. STARTING DATE OF THE CONTRACT AND DURATION OF THE TASKS

The contract for the first period is expected to be signed in February 2015 with the monthly surveys starting as from 1st April 2015.

In March 2015, a kick-off meeting is foreseen in Brussels on the EC premises, to introduce the members of the project team and the relevant Commission department from DG ECFIN. It will be an opportunity to detail the objectives and deliverables of the contract and clarify any methodological or procedural issues (schedule, reporting, etc.)

The duration of the tasks consists of monthly surveys during 12 months (for the period April 2015 – March 2016), an interim report after 6 ½ months and a final annual report after 13 months.

The execution and duration of the tasks shall be expressed as follows:

1/ the **provision of twelve monthly surveys** for the period:

- 1st April 2015 – 31st March 2016 **(period 1)**

  and, subject to renewal of the contract, for the next periods as follows :

- 1st renewal : 1st April 2016 – 31st March 2017 **(period 2)**
- 2nd renewal : 1st April 2017 – 31st March 2018 **(period 3)**
- 3rd renewal : 1st April 2018 – 31st March 2019 **(period 4)**

2/ the **submission of two evaluation reports** over half-yearly intervals for the above periods on the following submission dates:

- 15th October 2015 (interim report)

  30th April 2016 (final annual report)

and, subject to renewal of the contract, on the next submission dates as follows:

- 1st renewal : 15th October 2016 (interim report)

  30th April 2017 (final annual report)
- 2nd renewal : 15th October 2017 (interim report)

  30th April 2018 (final annual report)
- 3rd renewal : 15th October 2018 (interim report)

  30th April 2019 (final annual report)

5.2. RENEWAL OF THE CONTRACT

Unless written notification to the contrary is sent by one of the parties and received by the other party at least three months before the end of the tasks of a given period, the contract shall be **renewed automatically annually up to three times.** The contract will be renewed for the next period of the surveys and for the next submission dates of the evaluation reports as stipulated in point 5.1, under the same conditions. The contract will be renewed provided that satisfactory results have been achieved over the previous period as well as according to budgetary availability.

5.3. PLACE OF PERFORMANCE

The place of performance of the tasks shall be the contractor's premises or any other place indicated in the tender, with the exception of the Commission's premises.

Only the kick-off meeting (March 2015) will take place on EC premises in Brussels.

PART II. INFORMATION ON TENDERING

6. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR THE SUBMISSION OF TENDERS

- Submission of a tender implies that the contractor accepts all the terms and conditions set out in these specifications (including the Annexes) and waives all other terms of business.
- Submission of a tender binds the contractor to whom the contract is awarded during performance of the Contract.
- Changes to tenders will be accepted only if they are received on or before the final date set for the receipt of tenders.
- Variants are not allowed.
- Expenses incurred in respect of the preparation and presentation of tenders cannot be refunded.
- No information of any kind will be given on the state of progress with regard to the evaluation of tenders.
- Once the Commission has accepted the tender, it shall become the property of the Commission and the Commission shall treat it confidentially.
- The protocol on the Privileges and Immunities or, where appropriate, the Vienna Convention of 24 April 1963 on Consular Relations shall apply to this invitation to tender.
- Tenders may be submitted in any of the 23 official languages of the European Union. However, submitting the tender in English is encouraged as this facilitates the evaluation procedure.

7. PARTICIPATION IN TENDER PROCEDURE

Participation in this tender procedure is open on equal terms to all legal persons coming within the scope of the Treaties and to all 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[2] 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.

8. NO OBLIGATION TO AWARD THE CONTRACT

- Fulfilment of adjudication or invitation to tender procedure shall not involve the Commission in any obligation to award the contract.
- The Commission shall not be liable for any compensation with respect to tenderers whose tenders have not been accepted. Nor shall it be liable in the event of its deciding not to award the contract.

9. 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.

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[2] See http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_E/gproc_e/gp_gpa_e.htm

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.

10. SUBCONTRACTORS

- Subcontracting is permitted in the tender but the contractor will retain full liability towards the Contracting Authority for the 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 the contract execution, the change of any subcontractor identified in the tender will be subject to prior written approval of the Contracting Authority.

11. DETAILS OF THE CONTRACT – CONTRACTUAL CONDITIONS

The tenderer should bear in mind the provisions of the draft service contract (**see Part IV**) attached to these tender specifications which specifies the rights and obligations of the contractor, particularly those on the payment schedule, procedure for the approval of payments and deliverables, performance of the contract, confidentiality and checks and audit, etc.

The Union acquires ownership of the results of the contract (see article II.10 of the contract: *ownership of the results - intellectual and industrial property rights*) and the results may be used as described in article I.8 (*exploitation of the results of the contract*) of the contract.

New services consisting in the repetition of similar services
In accordance with Article 134.1(f) of the Rules of Application of the Financial Regulation, the Commission may exercise the option to make use of a negotiated procedure without prior publication of a contract notice in order to include new services consisting in the repetition of similar services. That procedure may be used only during the execution of the original contract and at the latest during the three years following its signing.

12. CONTENT OF THE TENDER

All tenders must be presented in three sections:

- Administrative documents:
  - Identification of the tenderer;
  - Evidence for exclusion criteria;
  - Evidence for selection criteria;
- Technical offer
- Financial offer

12.1. ADMINISTRATIVE DOCUMENTS

- The tenderer 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 point 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 services foreseen in the offer and in line with the present tender specifications.

- The tenderer (or the single contact point in case of joint tender) must provide the Financial Identification Form duly completed and signed together with its supporting evidence. Only one form per offer should be submitted (no form is needed for subcontractors and joint tenderers). The form is available on:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/financial_id_en.cfm#en

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

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

Tenderers that are already registered in the Commission's database (i.e.because they have already been contractors) must provide the form but are not obliged to provide the supporting evidence unless changes in their situation have occurred that might lead to an update of the Commission's database..

- Tenderer 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.
- A declaration on honour (**see Annex 1**), duly signed and dated by an authorised representative, stating that the tenderer (and identified subcontractors whose intended share of the contract is above 20%) is/are not in one of the situations of exclusion listed in Annex 1: provide the documents listed in part III **– 13. Exclusion criteria and evidence**
- Supporting documents to prove economic and financial capacity: provide the documents listed in part III **– 14.1 Economic and financial capacity criteria and evidence.**
- Supporting documents to prove technical and professional capacity: provide the documents listed in part III **– 14.2 Technical and professional capacity criteria and evidence.**
- Other substantiating documents if the candidate or tenderer cannot, for valid reasons, provide those indicated above.

12.2. TECHNICAL OFFER

The technical offer should address all the matters laid down in the specifications for the survey (see part I). The offer should contain detailed information on the survey methodology, including geographical coverage, survey mode, sample design (description of the universe, possible stratification method, sample size also by strata, expected response rate, treatment of non-response), weighting procedures, sample size per country, sample coverage (e.g. in terms of turnover, value added, balance sheet size or employment), sample representativeness at country, euro area and EU level, expected response rate and follow-up actions, etc. The level of detail of the tender will be important in the evaluation of the tender.

Tenderers must include in their tenders the technical specifications set out in part I, providing details with regard to the organisation of the survey. Tenderers shall describe their scheme to maintain/increase participation level, in order to meet the target. The technical offer must provide, as a minimum, all the information needed for the purpose of awarding the contract.

In particular, tenderers must provide a detailed description of the operational organisation to carry out the survey, including the allocation of resources. They should provide:

- information on the composition of the proposed team, including the number and the degree of direct involvement of managerial staff to be employed for delivering service object of this tender;
- information on the infrastructure, facilities and tools to be employed for performing the survey, especially with respect to the multi-country aspect of the survey;
- in the case of consortia, the structure set up for coordinating the work between the different members of the consortium, including working criteria for the distribution of assignments between the members of the consortium and the composition of ad hoc teams;

Any significant risks should be identified and contingency plans described (please note however that no variants can be foreseen in the proposed contingency plans).

12.3. FINANCIAL OFFER

- **Prices must be quoted in euro for each period as indicated in point 5.1**, including for the countries which do not form part of the euro zone. For the tenderers of the countries which do not form part of the euro zone, the amount of the offer cannot be revised because of exchange rate movements. The choice of exchange rate belongs to the tenderer, who assumes the risks or opportunities associated with these exchange rate movements.
- **The term *period* shall refer to 12 monthly surveys and 2 half-yearly evaluation reports with regard to the surveys**
- **Prices should be quoted free of all duties, taxes and other charges, i.e., also free of VAT**, as the Union is exempt from such charges in the EU under Articles 3 and 4 of the Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the European Communities of 8 April 1965 (OJEC L 152 of 13 July 1967). Exemption is granted to the Commission by the governments of the Member States, either through refunds upon presentation of documentary evidence or by direct exemption.
- For those countries where national legislation provides an exemption by means of a reimbursement, the amount of VAT is to be shown separately. In case of doubts about the applicable VAT system, it is the tenderer's responsibility to contact his national authorities to clarify the way in which the European Union is exempt from VAT.
- The price must be **inclusive of all expenses (including travel and subsistence), is not subject to revision and remains fixed throughout the 4 periods.**
- The indicative budget is set at **202 500.00 EUR per period.**
- The price quotation **must be signed** by the tenderer or his duly authorised representative by means of the **compulsory price quotation form** (see **Annex 6**).

PART III. PART III: ASSESSMENT AND AWARD OF A CONTRACT

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

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

13. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

All tenderers shall provide a declaration on their honour (see **Annex 1**), duly signed and dated by the authorised representative, stating that they are not in one of the situations of exclusion listed in the **Annex 1**.

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

In case of award of the contract, the successful tenderer shall provide the documents mentioned as supporting evidence in **Annex 1** 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 subcontractors identified in the tender whose intended share of the contract is above 20%.

However, in case such evidence confirming the declaration on honour has already been submitted to the Commission for the purpose of another procurement procedure, and provided that the issuing date of the documents does not exceed one year and that they are still valid, the candidate is allowed to send a copy of the relevant documentation together with a declaration on honour that no changes in his situation have occurred.

The successful tenderer is invited to check the **eCERTIS-tool**, an information system that helps to identify the different certificates and attestations frequently requested in procurement procedures across the EU Member States: http://ec.europa.eu/markt/ecertis/searchDocument.do?clean=true

14. 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 by each subcontractor identified in the tender 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.

14.1. ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CAPACITY CRITERIA AND EVIDENCE

The tenderer (i.e. in case of joint tender, the combined capacity of all members of the consortium and subcontractors identified in the tender) must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain the activity throughout the period during which the contract is implemented. The tenderer's economic and financial capacity will be assessed on the basis of the following supporting documents to be submitted with the tender:

- The balance sheets and profit and loss accounts for the last two financial years for which the accounts have been closed. For newly created entities, the business plan will replace closed accounts.
- Failing that, appropriate statements from banks.
- If applicable, evidence of professional risk indemnity insurance.

If, for some exceptional reason which the Commission considers justified, a tenderer is unable to provide one or other of the above documents, he may prove his economic and financial capacity by any other document which the Commission considers appropriate. In any case, the Commission 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.

14.2. TECHNICAL AND PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY CRITERIA AND EVIDENCE

The tenderer (i.e. in case of joint tender, the combined capacity of all members of the consortium and subcontractors identified in the tender) must have the professional competencies as well as appropriate qualifications necessary to implement the service contract and must provide the appropriate supporting documentation.

The following criteria will be used to assess the tenderer's technical and professional capacity:

- proven experience of at least three years in successfully carrying out monthly or quarterly surveys in the field of application (i.e. business surveys). The tenderer's track record in terms of experience and the qualifications of the experts and managers primarily responsible for implementing the service contract will be considered;
- proof of sound administrative and financial management structures, and access to the operational resources (technical, personal, management, etc.) needed to successfully conduct the business surveys in at least the following EU countries: Germany, Spain, France, Luxembourg, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Austria, Sweden, Poland and Czech Republic.

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

- a duly filled in standard list detailing previous projects and activities performed and connected to the action to be carried out
- curriculum vitae or description of the profile of the people primarily responsible for managing and implementing the service contract
- a description of the technical equipment, tools or facilities at the disposal of the tenderer
- the current organisational chart

Tenderers' attention is drawn to the fact that any total or partial omission of information for which one or more service providers involved in the tender are responsible may lead the Commission to exclude the tender from the rest of the procedure.

15. AWARD CRITERIA

The contract will be awarded according to the best-value-for-money procedure evaluated on the basis of the price and of the following award criteria using the weighting indicated below:

No	QUALITATIVE AWARD CRITERIA	Maximum quality score
1	The quality of the proposed survey methodology with reference to:	60 points
	• sampling frame (source, survey unit, size, population coverage, updating frequency, cut-offs);	(10)
	• sampling method (random vs. purposive), use of quota, stratification, panels;	(16)
	• sample size, response rates, number of completed interviews	(14)
	• survey mode (face-to-face, CATI, email, postal, internet, etc.);	(3)
	• measures to raise/maintain response rates (advance letters, reminders, follow-up activities, incentives to respond, etc.);	(3)
	• weighting scheme (characteristics and updating frequency);	(4)
	• treatment of missing data (unit non-response and item non-response) and data quality control system	(5)
	• questionnaire design	(5)
2	Quality of the offer in terms of addressing the specific features of the financial services sector and in terms of organizing and coordinating the survey across different EU countries.	20
3	The efficiency of the tenderers' work organisation, in terms of flexibility, infrastructure, qualified staff and facilities for preparing the survey, carrying out the work and evaluating and reporting the results in the countries where the survey is carried out.	20
Total quality score		**100**

Tenders scoring less than 50% of the maximum quality score for a single criterion (1 to 3) and obtaining less than 70 points out of 100 in the total quality score will be excluded.

The points scored for the above qualitative criteria will be compared to the price, and the contract will be awarded to the tender offering the best value for money on the basis of the following formula.

FORMULA FOR THE AWARD
Total quality Points / Total Price

Since assessment of the tenders will focus on the quality of the proposed services, tenderers should elaborate on all points addressed by these specifications in order to score as many points as possible. The mere repetition of mandatory requirements set out in these specifications, without going into details or without giving any added value, will only result in a very low score. In addition, if certain essential points of these specifications are not expressly covered by the tender, the Commission may decide to give a zero mark for the relevant qualitative award criteria.

16. OPENING OF TENDERS

Tenders will be opened on **02.10.2014 at 11h00 on** at the following location:

Office address: European Commission Directorate General ECFIN Unit ECFIN R3 Financial Management and Control Office N105 01/080 1049 Bruxelles/Brussels BELGIQUE/BELGIË Belgium

One **authorised representative** of each tenderer may attend the opening of the tenders. Candidates wishing to attend are requested to notify their intention by sending an e-mail at least 48 hours in advance to the functional mailbox ECFIN-BCS-FINA-CALL2014@ec.europa.eu. This notification must be signed by an authorised officer of the tenderer and specify the name of the person who will attend the opening of the tenders on the tenderer's behalf.

17. EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The process of awarding will take place in the 4th quarter of 2014. An Evaluation committee is to be set up for this purpose.

18. INFORMATION FOR TENDERERS

The Commission will inform tenderers of decisions reached concerning the award of the contract, including the grounds for any decision not to award a contract or to recommence the procedure.