

COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMME TO COMBAT SOCIAL EXCLUSION

CALL FOR TENDERS

**« A THEMATIC STUDY TO ANALYSE POLICY MEASURES TO PROMOTE
ACCESS TO INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AS A MEANS OF COMBATING
SOCIAL EXCLUSION »**

Number VT/2004/039

Period of Performance: 01/12/2004-30/09/2004
(10 months)

Budget Line 04040202

TERM OF REFERENCE

1. Specific Context

The Joint Report on Social Inclusion, based on an analysis of the 2003/2005 National Action Plans on poverty and social exclusion, identified the impact of the rapid growth of the knowledge based society and Information and Communication Technologies as one of the important structural changes that is impacting on poverty and social exclusion, sometimes positively and sometimes negatively. The importance of the issue is also recognised in many of the acceding countries in their Joint Memoranda on Social Inclusion. However, it is clear that while there is a widespread recognition of this issue across countries and while there is a wide range of interesting initiatives in place the starting point varies greatly across countries as do the effectiveness of policies and programmes and the extent of the links to other social inclusion policies and to the development of national and local action plans on poverty and social exclusion. This has thus been identified as a priority area for further work under the Community action programme on social exclusion and particularly for a thematic study aimed at supporting Member States in the development of effective policies and programmes in this area.

2. Purpose of the Contract

The aim of this contract is five fold:

- to identify clearly the risks of increased poverty and social exclusion that the rapid growth of the knowledge society and Information and Communication Technologies can bring and to identify those most at risk in this regard;
- to identify new opportunities for preventing and overcoming poverty and social exclusion that are created by the rapid growth of the knowledge society and Information and Communication Technologies;
- to identify policy measures and programmes that are successful in helping to avoid the new risks of exclusion arising from developments in Information and Communication Technologies and in what particular national or local context;
- to identify policies and programmes that are effective in using the potential for Information and Communication Technologies to promote increased social inclusion of those at risk of poverty and social exclusion, particularly those at high risk;
- to outline the key elements necessary for the development of more coherent and strategic and integrated approaches which ensure that policies in relation to Information and Community Technologies reinforce other policies to promote social inclusion, particularly in the context of developing National Action Plans to promote social inclusion.

3. Tasks to be performed by the Contractor

The study will compare and contrast policy approaches and outcomes in a representative sample of at least ten different countries. These may be chosen from among the existing Member States, the acceding countries, candidate countries and EFTA/EEA countries. Proposals should contain a good balance between countries with a more developed and a less developed infrastructure and between existing Member States and acceding, candidate and EFTA/EEA countries. The study will also take account of international studies and experience in this area.

In particular the contracting party will undertake the following tasks:

- set the context for the rest of the research by providing a synthesis of the already extensive literature outlining the most pertinent risks and opportunities in relation to social exclusion arising from the rapid growth of the knowledge society and Information and Communication Technologies and identify those most at risk in this regard;

on the basis of desk research and field studies in selected countries and making use of both statistical data and impact assessments and also taking account of the different policy contexts in different countries and local areas:

- identify policies and programmes in place (both those developed by national authorities and by social partners or NGOs) which appear to be successful at removing barriers to access and increasing participation of those at risk of poverty and social exclusion in the information society;
- identify policies and programmes (both those developed by national authorities and by social partners or NGOs) which appear to be successful in exploiting the Information Society's potential for increasing social inclusion of those individuals and communities particularly at risk of poverty and social exclusion, such as people with disabilities, people living in isolated or remote communities, immigrants or ethnic minorities or young people leaving school early;
- identify the key elements necessary to ensure a coherent, integrated and strategic approach to the development of policies and programmes involving all relevant actors which will enhance the contribution of the knowledge society and Information and Communication Technologies to promoting social inclusion, particularly in the context of the Union's social inclusion process and the development of National Action Plans on poverty and social exclusion;
- present the conclusions of this work in a draft report at a seminar to be held in the Commission's premises (using the Commission's translation services). This would involve relevant policy makers, experts and social partners and NGOs working in the field of the fight against social exclusion and poverty and with a

particular interest and expertise in this area. The report would then be refined and amended by the consultants in the light of this dialogue.

4. Expertise required

See Annex IV, CVs of experts

The contracting party will require:

- a deep knowledge of the nature and causes of poverty and social exclusion;
- an extensive knowledge of research and literature in relation to the rapid growth in the knowledge society and Information and Communication Technologies and their impact on social inclusion;
- a proven track record in the field of transnational policy analysis, particularly in relation to poverty and social exclusion and the knowledge society and Information and Communication Technologies.

5. Time schedule and reporting

See Article I.2. of the Contract

It is envisaged that the contract will begin in December 2004 and will be completed by mid September 2005.

As well as the report of the study the contractor will present a draft activity report and then a final report containing:

- a complete description of the work undertaken in the framework of this contract;
- a presentation of the results obtained for the whole of the contract period in accordance with the terms of reference;
- any comments, suggestions or recommendations considered useful or necessary by the contractor.

The draft final activity report together with two copies ought to be submitted to the Commission at the latest four weeks before the end of the period mentioned above. The final activity report ought to be submitted at the latest two weeks after the Commission has sent its comments or has accepted the draft final activity report.

6. Payments and standard contract

Payments shall be made in EUR (€)

The terms of payment are as follows:

- 30% within 30 days after the signing of the contract

- the balance following the Commission's acceptance of both the final report and final invoice.

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

7. Price

The price sought ought not to exceed € **150,000** (including travel and subsistence expenses).

The price should be indicated in Euro (€), excluding VAT (using the conversion rates published in the C series of the Official Journal of the European Communities on the day when the invitation to tender was sent out) and should be broken down as per the format given in Annex III of the attached draft contract to include:

Part A: Fees and direct costs

— Fees, expressed in number of person/days and unit price per working day for each Expert proposed. The unit price is expected to cover the expert's fees and administrative expenses, but it should not include the reimbursable costs defined below.

This includes:

— other direct costs, to be described

Part B: Reimbursable Costs

— Travel expenses

— Daily subsistence allowances (DSA's): these cover all the subsistence costs of the Experts who are on mission for short term assignments outside their usual place of work

— Translations costs, if any

— Contingencies, if any

The total price = Part A + Part B

8. Composition of partnership or consortium

If a partnership or consortium is envisaged, its composition should be specified and the criteria listed under point 10 should be detailed to individual members of the partnership. In addition, one of the consortium members must be designated as lead Contractor, and

must ensure full responsibility towards the Commission as regards both the tender and the future contract – if awarded to them.

9. Exclusion criteria and evidence

Regulation

Article 93 of the Financial Regulation:

1. Candidates or tenderers shall be excluded from participation in a procurement procedure 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 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;
 - (f) following another procurement procedure or grant award procedure financed by the Community budget, they have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations.
2. Candidates or tenderers must certify that they are not in one of the situations listed in paragraph 1.

Article 134 of the Rule for Implementation – Evidence

1. The contracting authority shall accept, as satisfactory evidence that the candidate or tenderer is not in one of the situations described in point (a), (b) or (e) of Article 93(1) of the Financial Regulation, production of a recent extract from the judicial record or, failing that, a recent equivalent document issued by a judicial or administrative authority in the country of origin or provenance showing that those requirements are satisfied.

2. 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 no such certificate is 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.
3. 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.

Article 94 of the Financial Regulation:

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 contract procedure or fail to supply this information.

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.

Any bid not including the supporting documents provided for in this Annex will be excluded.

10. Selection criteria

- A minimum experience and expertise of five years in the fields of policy research and analysis on issues of poverty and social exclusion, part of which should have been focussed on issues in relation to the rapid growth of the knowledge society and Information and Communication Technologies - demonstrated by providing a list of relevant policy analysis and research projects.
- Details of educational and professional qualifications of the person(s) undertaking the study. The project director will require a deep knowledge in relation to ICT issues and social inclusion in Member States and of the different policy approaches being adopted; an extensive knowledge of the European and international literature and data on the links between access to the knowledge society and social inclusion; a proven

track record in the field of policy analysis, particularly in relation to poverty and social and the impact of ICTs; a good understanding of the different policies in relation to the knowledge society and ICTs in Member States that enhance or worsen social inclusion particularly for those most at risk of poverty social exclusion.

- The consultants/researchers should have no-conflict of interest and be completely independent. A statement of independence should be included in the offer.
- Sound financial position of the consultant/researchers. Full set of audited financial statements and accounts - balance sheet and profit and loss account for the past three years. Annual budget of the last two years for a semi-public or non-profit organisation.

11. Award criteria

The contract will be awarded to the tenderer whose offer represents the best value for money - taking into account the following criteria (It should be noted that the contract will not be awarded to a tenderer who receives less than 70 % on the Award Criteria):

1. The quality and consistency of the tender (**maximum 30%**)
 - the degree of understanding of the nature of the assignment, its context and results to be achieved (**maximum 15%**).
 - the quality and appropriateness of the strategy proposed for the implementation of the expertise (**maximum 15%**).
2. The technical value of the bid and the proposed methodological approach (**maximum 70%**)
 - the workplan: actions proposed to supplement the sources of information available, the knowledge and use of existing research in the fields covered by the expertise as well as available data to complement background information (**maximum 25%**).
 - type of analysis provided: interpretation of quantitative and qualitative information according to the proposed strategy (**maximum 25%**).
 - timetable including human resources mobilised to carry out the different stages of the work and the capacity to complete the work well in the time available (**maximum 20%**).
3. Price.

12. Content and presentation of the bids

Content of the bids:

The tender must include:

- All information and documents necessary to enable the Commission to conduct an appraisal of the offer on the bases of the selection criteria and the award criteria (see points 10 and 11 above).
This includes inter alia:
- A "Financial identification" form duly completed and signed by the bank.
- The price.
- The detailed curriculum vitae of the proposed expert(s).
- The name and quality of the contractor's legal representative (i.e. the person duly authorised to act legally on behalf of the Contractor in relation to third parties).
- Social Security for individuals and VAT numbers or proof of exemption.

Presentation of the bids:

- Bids must be submitted in triplicate (1 original and 2 copies).
- Bids must contain all the information required by the Commission (see points 7, 8, 9 and 10 above).
- Bids must be clear and concise.
- Bids must be signed by the tenderer's legal representative. All unsigned bids will be excluded.
- Bids must be delivered according to the requirements set out in the letter of invitation to tender, and before the date and time indicated in this letter.