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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
REGIONAL AND URBAN POLICY

2014-2020 Policy and Legislation Inter-institutional relations

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**Competitive Multiple Framework Service Contract
for the provision of Studies related to the future development of Cohesion Policy
and the ESI Funds (Lot 3)**

Framework Contracts Nr 2014CE16BAT010 / 2014CE16BAT011 / 2014CE16BAT012

Service Request Nr 2014CE16BAT061

SPECIFICATIONS

1. TITLE OF THE REQUEST FOR SERVICES

The use of new provisions during the programming phase of the European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds.

2. OVERALL PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND OF THIS STUDY

Cohesion policy has undergone a far-reaching reform for the 2014-2020 period. The reform establishes the policy as the EU's main investment policy to foster the achievement of European objectives (Europe 2020 strategy of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth) and puts a strong emphasis on increased effectiveness and results orientation. To this end, a number of new provisions have been integrated into the regulatory framework for the 2014-2020 programming period¹.

¹ - Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the Cohesion Fund (CF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 (referred to as CPR).

- Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal (referred to as ETC Regulation).

- Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 (hereafter ERDF Regulation).

- Regulation (EU) No 1300/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the Cohesion Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1084/2006 (hereafter CF Regulation).

At the forefront of them, 11 thematic objectives based on the Europe 2020 strategy have been defined. To maximise the impact of investments, Member States and regions need to concentrate EU funding on a limited number of these objectives, or for the ESF on a limited number of investment priorities, in the light of the specific territorial challenges they face and their development needs.

Ensuring a greater focus on the results of EU-supported investment is also at the core of the reform. Programmes need to focus on results as from their design. They shall be based on a clear 'intervention logic' starting with identifying development needs and the changes the programme is intended to bring about in order to meet these needs and going on to demonstrate how the spending planned helps to do this. Each programme must set 'specific objectives' and the related expected results that are intended to be achieved while taking into account the needs and characteristics of the area to which it relates.

In addition, the new regulations provide a more detailed frame and more possibilities for the use of financial instruments.

A number of new ways of implementing policy have also been developed to tackle particular territorial development challenges (such as integrated territorial investments, community-led local development and multi-fund programmes combining finance from the ESF, ERDF and the Cohesion Fund).

Common provisions have been established for the ESI Funds to improve coordination and harmonise the implementation of the ESI Funds. In this context, the Common Strategic Framework (CSF) provides strategic direction on how to achieve more effective coordination between the ESI funds and other EU and national instruments, and to promote horizontal principles.

Programming documents shall demonstrate what arrangements are planned at national and regional level to ensure an effective and efficient implementation of the ESI Funds on the ground.

The Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) wishes to assess the use of such elements of the new regulatory framework during the programming phase.

The overall purpose of this study is therefore to develop an evidence-base on how these new provisions have been used in Partnership Agreements and programmes financed by the ERDF and the CF, including multi-fund programmes. The findings will feed into the Commission's assessment of the outcome of programming negotiations and into further reflections on the future of the policy. They may also contribute to improving the implementation of these new provisions during the implementation phase of the 2014-2020 programmes.

- Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006 (hereafter ESF Regulation)

- Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 (hereafter EARDF Regulation).

- Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2328/2003, (EC) No 861/2006, (EC) No 1198/2006 and (EC) No 791/2007 and Regulation (EU) No 1255/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council (hereafter EMFF Regulation).

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTRACT

3.1. Objectives of the study

The overall objective of this study is to assess how the new provisions have been used in all 28 Member States during the programming of the ESI Funds. In doing this, the study should fulfil the following specific objectives:

- A. Provide a synthesis of how the new provisions are reflected in all Partnership Agreements, operational programmes financed by the ERDF and the CF, including multi-fund programmes, and ETC programmes financed by the ERDF.
- B. Provide an assessment of how the new provisions have been used during the programming phase.
- C. Provide conclusions on strengths and weaknesses with regard to the application of the new provisions during the programming phase, as well as first conclusions on their value.

3.2. Methodology

Objective A should be addressed through desk studies of the 28 Partnership Agreements, the around 215 operational programmes financed by the ERDF and the CF, including the 92 multi-fund programmes co-financed by the ESF², and the 79 cooperation programmes financed by the ERDF. Desk studies should also cover the relevant parts of the Commission's formal observations on all Partnership Agreements and relating programmes. Relevant data from the Partnership Agreements and programmes will be provided by the Commission services to the contractor (Excel files).

Objectives B and C should be addressed by using:

- the outcome of the abovementioned desk studies;
- the relevant parts of ex ante evaluations carried out for each programme in accordance with Article 55 of the CPR (to be provided to the contractor by the Commission);
- the outcome of on-line surveys covering all Managing Authorities;
- the outcome of 40 to 50 interviews of the main relevant actors at Union level (geographical desks in DG REGIO and DG EMPL and competence centres in DG REGIO etc.) and at national level (through a selection of coordinating ministries/services/bodies in the 28 Member States and Managing authorities).

3.3. Tasks

The study covers five tasks. The first task consists of a report setting out the methodological approach to the different elements of the study as a whole. It needs to be agreed with the Commission before proceeding with work on the other tasks. Tasks 2-4 correspond each to one of the objectives of the study set out in section 3.1. Task 5 relates to meetings to be held with the Commission.

² Programmes exclusively dedicated to technical assistance fall under the scope of this study to the extent that they refer to provisions mentioned under Tasks 2 and 3.

Task 1: Methodological report

The consultant shall submit a methodological report of max 50 pages (plus annexes) setting out its approach to carry out the different tasks covered by this study.

In relation to **Task 2** of this study, the report shall demonstrate how the data collected from the Partnership Agreements and operational and cooperation programmes will be used and analysed. The consultant shall in particular:

- suggest **typologies / categorisation systems** for each of the points requested below (*Section Task 2*) in order to streamline the mapping and facilitate the analysis of how the new regulatory provisions were used during the programming of the ESI Funds. Information gathered in the programming documents should be clustered around the main issues / problems at stake for each point;
- propose a template for the **database** that will be used to map the analysis Member State by Member State. The final output of this database should be provided under Excel format and should include a filter function.

In relation to **Task 3** of this study, the methodological report shall describe the planned approach for assessing the influence of the new provisions introduced in the ESI Funds legislative package 2014-2020. It shall in particular:

- explain how **interviewees** will be selected to ensure the coverage of a representative sample of programmes. The sample of programmes should cover all 28 Member States and all three categories of regions for operational programmes financed by the ERDF including multi-fund programmes. The sample of cooperation programmes should cover a proportionate selection of cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation. Interviews may be handled on site or via phone calls in the relevant languages. Draft questionnaires to be used for these interviews and a description of the planned methodologies for analysing their results should be provided in an annex;
- identify the methodology planned by the consultant to organise **web-surveys** to be sent in the relevant languages to all the Managing authorities. Draft questionnaires to be used for surveys should be provided in an annex.

In relation to **Task 4** of this study, there should also be a description of the method to be applied for mapping the different categories of strengths and weaknesses relating to the implementation of the new provisions of the 2014-2020 regulatory framework. The methodological report shall also set out the approach for gathering evidence to draw first conclusions on their value.

Task 2: Provide a synthesis of how the new provisions are reflected in the Partnership Agreements, the operational programmes financed by the ERDF and the CF, including multi-fund programmes, and the ETC programmes financed by the ERDF.

The analysis and conclusions should provide evidence on the new provisions through a comprehensive analysis of programming documents, covering the following elements.

- 1) Strategic programming
- 2) Thematic concentration

- 3) Building of priority axes
- 4) Result-orientation ('Intervention logic')
- 5) Planned use of financial instruments
- 6) Planned use of major projects
- 7) Use of co-financing rates
- 8) Integrated approaches to territorial development
- 9) Coordination between the ESI Funds and other Union and national funding instruments and with the European Investment Bank
- 10) Administrative capacity building
- 11) Administrative burden
- 12) Horizontal principles and policy objectives
- 13) Efficient implementation of the ESI Funds

More detail on each of the elements is given below.

1) Strategic programming³ (see Section 1.1 of Partnership Agreements, Section 1.1.1 of operational and cooperation programmes).

The study should analyse:

- how the sectoral **needs and growth potentials** to be addressed through the ESI Funds have been identified at national and regional (looking especially at the links to Europe 2020 and the European Semester) and how these choices have been presented in programming documents;
- the use of the **flexibilities given to the Member States to transfer funds** between categories of regions (Article 93 of the CPR – Section 1.7 of Partnership Agreements) and between goals (Article 94 of the CPR – Section 1.8 of Partnership Agreements), including the justifications provided for such transfers.

2) Thematic concentration⁴ (Sections 1.3 and 1.4 of Partnership Agreements, Sections 1.1.2 and 1.2 of the operational and cooperation programmes).

The contractor shall identify:

- the thematic objectives and the investment priorities selected by Member State, by Fund, and for the ERDF and multi-fund programmes, by category of regions and their financial allocations;
- by thematic objective, the main results sought for each ESI Fund, especially in relation to the Europe 2020 objectives and to the relevant Council recommendations;
- where regulatory thematic concentration requirements were exceeded.

³ Articles 4(1), 11, 15(1)(a)(i), 27(1), 96(1), 96(2)(a), Annex I of the CPR; Articles 8(1) and 8(2)(a) of the ETC Regulation; Article 8(1)(b) of the EARDF Regulation.

⁴ Articles 9, 15(1)(a)(iii) and (iv), 18, 27(2), 96(2)(a) of the CPR; Articles 4 and 5 of the ERDF Regulation; Articles 6 and 7 of the ETC Regulation; Article 4 of the CF Regulation, Articles 3, 4 and 11(1) of the ESF Regulation.

3) Building of priority axes⁵ (Section 2.A, 2.A.1 and 2.A.2 of operational and cooperation programmes).

The consultant shall identify:

- the types of priority axes used in the programmes (use of "basic" axes vs. "combination" axes mentioned in Article 96(1)(a), (b), (c) and (d) of the CPR);
- to which extent priority axes will be implemented solely through financial instruments, financial instruments set up at Union level or community-led local development (in accordance with Article 120 of the CPR);
- to which extent complex priorities have been used
- in multi-fund programmes: to which extent priority axes dedicated to social innovation and transnationality have been established in accordance with Article 11 of the ESF Regulation.

4) Result-orientation ('Intervention logic')⁶

The contractor shall identify:

- the main ways in which **specific objectives and result indicators** have been established in the programmes for each thematic objective and their consistency with the investment priorities selected, in order to reflect the intervention logic (Section 2.A.5 of operational and cooperation programmes);
- how intended actions to be supported by the ERDF, the CF and for multi-fund programmes, the ESF, have been presented in the programmes (Section 2.A.6.1, 2.A.6.2 and 2.A.6.5 of operational and cooperation programmes);
- which are the guiding principles for selecting operations.

5) Planned use of financial instruments⁷ (Section 2.A.6.3 of the operational and cooperation programmes).

The contractor shall identify the programmes planning to use financial instruments, highlighting especially:

- the thematic objectives and investment priorities for which the use of financial instrument is envisaged;
- elements relevant to SME initiative (in line with article 97 of the CPR).

6) Planned use of major projects⁸ (Section 2.A.6.4 of operational and cooperation programmes).

⁵ Article 96(1) and Annex I (Section 3.3) of the CPR; Article 8(1) of the ETC Regulation; Article 11 of the ESF Regulation.

⁶ Article 27(4), 96(2)(b)(i) to (iv) of the CPR; Article 6 and Annex I of the ERDF Regulation, Articles 8(2)(b)(i) to (iv), 12 and 16, and the Annex of the ETC Regulation; Article 5 and Annex I of the CF Regulation, Article 5 and Annex I of the ESF Regulation.

⁷ Articles 37, 96(2)(b)(iii) and 97 of the CPR; Article 15 of the ESF Regulation.

⁸ Articles 96(2)(b)(iii) and 100 of the CPR; Article 8(2)(e) of the ETC Regulation.

In view of this, the contractor shall establish:

- which programmes plan to use major projects;
- in which policy areas.

7) Use of co-financing rates⁹ (Section 3.2 of operational and cooperation programmes).

The contractor shall establish a mapping of co-financing rates (up to the ceilings foreseen in Article 120 of the CPR) and of the use made of the different possibilities to modulate them (as foreseen in Article 121 of the CPR), by Member States, Fund and category of region (for the ERDF and, in multi-fund programmes, the ESF).

8) Integrated approaches to territorial development

The study should identify:

- how Member States have presented their **analysis in relation to territorial challenges in programming documents¹⁰** (Sections 1.1 and 3 of Partnership Agreements, Section 4 of operational and cooperation programmes);
- to which extent **community-led local development (CLLD)** has been used¹¹ (Section 3.1.1 of Partnership Agreements, Section 4.1 of operational and cooperation programmes);
- to which extent, **integrated territorial investments (ITI)** have been used¹² (Section 3.1.2 of the Partnership Agreements and 4.3 of operational and cooperation programmes);
- how **integrated actions for sustainable urban development¹³** have been presented in programming documents (Section 3.1.3 of Partnership Agreements and 4.2 of operational and cooperation programmes financed by the ERDF, including multi-fund programmes);
- the **main priority areas for cooperation under the ESI Funds, including macro-regional and sea-basin strategies¹⁴** (Section 3.1.4 of Partnership Agreement, Sections 4.4 and 4.5 of operational and cooperation programmes);
- the **specific needs of geographical areas most affected by poverty or target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion¹⁵** and how the ESI

⁹ Article 96(2)(d)(ii), Article 8(2)(d) of the ETC Regulation.

¹⁰ Articles 11(e), 15(2)(a)(i), 96(3), Sections 3 and 6 of Annex I of the CPR; Article 8(3) of the ETC Regulation

¹¹ Articles 2(19), 15(2)(a)(i), 32 to 35, 96(3)(a) and Section 3.3 of Annex I of the CPR; Articles 8(3)(a) and 10 of the ETC Regulation; Article 5(9)(d) of the ERDF Regulation; Article 3(1)(b)(vi) and 12(1) of the ESF Regulation; Articles 8(1)(m)(iv) and (v), 42 to 44 of the ERDF Regulation; Article 18(1)(h) and Chapter III of Title V of the EMFF Regulation.

¹² Articles 15(2)(a)(i), 36, 96(3)(c) and Section 3.3 of Annex I of the CPR; Article 8(3)(c) and 11 of ETC Regulation; Article 12(1) of the ESF Regulation.

¹³ Articles 15(2)(a)(i) and 96(3)(b) of the CPR, Article 7 of the ERDF Regulation, Article 8(3)(b) of ETC Regulation; Article 12(1) of the ESF Regulation.

¹⁴ Articles 2(31) and (32), 11(f), 15(2)(a)(ii), 27(3), 96(3)(d) and (e), and Annex I (Sections 6.4(c) and 7) of the CPR; Article 8(3)(d) of ETC Regulation; Articles 10 and 11 of the ESF Regulation.

¹⁵ Articles 15(2)(a)(iii) and 96(4)(a) of the CPR Regulation.

Funds will be used to address them (Section 3.1.5 of Partnership Agreements, Section 5 of operational programmes);

- the **specific needs of geographical areas which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps**¹⁶ (Section 3.1.6 of Partnership Agreements, Section 6 of operational programmes) and how the ESI Funds will be used to address them.

9) Coordination between the ESI Funds and other Union and national funding instruments and with the European Investment Bank¹⁷ (Section 2.1 of Partnership Agreements, Section 8 of operational programmes, Section 6 of cooperation programmes).

The contractor shall identify:

- how Member States and regions intend to **ensure coordination between the ESI Funds**;
- how they intend to **ensure coordination of the ESI Funds with other Union and national funding instruments and the EIB**.

10) Administrative capacity building¹⁸ (Section 2.5 of Partnership Agreements)

The contractor shall identify, by Member State and Fund:

- the needs identified by Member States / Managing Authorities to reinforce administrative capacity of authorities (involved in the management and control of operational programmes) and beneficiaries;
- the main actions foreseen to reinforce administrative capacity.

11) Administrative burden¹⁹ (Section 2.6 of Partnership Agreements, Section 10 of operational programmes and Section 7 of cooperation programmes)

The contractor shall, by Member State, programme, Fund and category of regions, establish an assessment of the administrative burden of beneficiaries (reflected in programming documents), based on:

- the summary of the assessment of the administrative burden on beneficiaries mentioned in the programmes;
- the main actions planned to achieve a reduction in administrative burden, including the planned use of simplified cost options, the time frame for their

¹⁶ Articles 15(2)(a)(iv), 96(4)(b) and Section 6 of Annex I of the CPR Regulation; Articles 10 and 11 of the ERDF Regulation.

¹⁷ Article 1, 4(2) and (6), 10, 11, 15(1)(b)(i), 27(1), 96(6)(a) and Annex I (Section 4) of the CPR; Article 8(5)(a) of the ETC Regulation; Article 8(1)(l) of the EARDF Regulation; Article 18(1)(l) of the EMFF Regulation.

¹⁸ Articles 9(11), 15(1)(b)(v), 96(2)(a), 96 (b)(i), and Annex XI (Part I – 11) of the CPR; Article 8(2)(b)(vi); Article 5(11) of the ERDF Regulation; Article 4(e) of the CF Regulation; Article 3(d) of the ESF Regulation.

¹⁹ Articles 4(5) and (10), 15(1)(b)(vi), 27(1) and 96(6)(c) of the CPR; Article 8(5)(b) of the ETC Regulation.

implementation, and to what extent technical assistance is planned to support this process.

12) Horizontal principles and policy objectives²⁰

The contractor shall identify:

- how Member States and regions plan to ensure the **promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination in the implementation of the ESI Funds, including accessibility** (Section 1.5.2 of Partnership Agreements, Sections 11.2 and 11.3 of operational programmes, Sections 8.2 and 8.3 of cooperation programmes);
- how they plan to ensure the **promotion of sustainable development in the implementation of the ESI Funds** (Section 1.5.3 of Partnership Agreements, Section 11.1 of operational programmes, Section 8.1 of cooperation programmes);
- how Member States plan to ensure the **"mainstreaming" of horizontal policy objectives** identified as relevant for one or more programmes and one or more ESI Funds (including those set out in the Common Strategic Framework - Annex I of the CPR, such as demographic change) - Section 1.5.4 of the Partnership Agreements.

13) Efficient implementation of the ESI Funds²¹ (Section 4.1 of Partnership Agreements). In view of this, the contractor shall identify, by Member State:

- existing systems for electronic data exchange (e.g. service already available for beneficiaries) and the main development needs;
- planned actions to gradually permit all exchanges of information between beneficiaries and authorities responsible for management and control of programme to be carried out by electronic data exchange.

Task 3: Provide an assessment of how the new provisions have been used during the programming phase.

The contractor shall assess the processes through which new provisions have been applied at Union, national and regional levels, on the basis of:

- the outcome of the interviews and the surveys;
- the analysis of the relevant part of ex ante evaluations.

The analysis shall especially highlight for each of the points below:

²⁰ Articles 4(2), 7, 8, 11(d), 15(1)(a)(v), 96(7) and Annex I (Section 5) of the CPR; Article 8(7) of the ETC Regulation; Articles 7 and 8 of the ESF Regulation.

²¹ Articles 15(2)(b) of the CPR.

- how ex ante evaluations have influenced the choices made during the programming phase;
- how exchanges with the Commission in the context of the informal dialogue and the programme negotiations (including formal observations, guidance provided etc.) have influenced choices made;
- potential **differences** across Member States and Funds in the implementation of these provisions during programming;
- **specific issues/challenges relating to cooperation programmes** financed by the ERDF.

It shall cover the following questions:

1) Strategic programming:

- What was the approach taken in the 28 Member States for strategic programming (e.g. What was the process for setting up Partnership Agreements and programmes: top-down approach, bottom-up approach, simultaneous preparation of Partnership Agreements and programmes?)
- How were the links between programming documents and both Europe 2020 and the European Semester established?

2) Thematic concentration. How did Member States seek to achieve thematic concentration?

3) Building of priority axes. How was the structure of priority axes decided? How did Member States and regions ensure the coherence of complex priority axes? How was the use of these assessed by the Commission?

4) Result-orientation (Intervention logic). What was the process at national and regional levels to ensure the shift in the way to approach programming (looking for results, i.e. changes on the ground) and in using common result indicators for ESF priorities)? What were the specific challenges faced by Member States and Managing Authorities in defining specific objectives and result indicators?

5) Financial instruments. What were the reasons given in ex ante evaluations (Article 55(3)(h) of the CPR) for the choice to make use of financial instruments? What are expectations from Member States/regions in using them?

6) Integrated approaches to territorial development.

- How were territorial challenges identified at national and regional levels?
- How did Member States ensure that the approaches to territorial development were integrated at regional and sub-regional levels?
- Were there particular difficulties in implementing integrated approaches to territorial development (CLLD, ITI, sustainable urban development, poverty mapping)?

7) Coordination between the ESI Funds and other Union and national instruments, and the EIB. What was the process for establishing those arrangements? Is this process perceived as having contributed to improved coordination?

8) Administrative capacity building. What were the process and the challenges faced when developing these provisions in the programming documents? How have they been translated into actions?

9) Administrative burden. What were the process and the challenges faced when assessing administrative burden and defining necessary actions? How have they been translated into actions?

10) Horizontal principles and policy objectives. What were the process and the challenges faced when programming those arrangements?

11) Efficient implementation of the ESI Funds. What was the process for fostering the development of systems for electronic data exchange at national and regional levels?

Task 4: Provide conclusions

On the basis of the output of tasks 2 and 3 the contractor shall provide conclusions on **strengths and weaknesses** with regard to the implementation of the new provisions of the 2014-2020 regulatory framework during the programming phase. This analysis should be based on a typology of factors behind successful and less successful implementation of these provisions during this process.

The contractor shall provide **first conclusions on the value** of these new provisions in establishing a better frame to achieving cohesion policy objectives.

Task 5: Meetings with the Commission staff

The contractor is expected to attend 5 meetings to be held at the Commission premises for kicking off the project and discussing the deliverables with the members of Commission staff (Steering Group). These meetings will be organised by the Commission.

3.4. Deliverables

The contractor is expected to provide the following deliverables:

1. **Methodological report:** a report (max 50 pages plus annexes) describing the methodology that will be applied to the study, including the template to be used to carry out the mapping of how the new provisions are reflected in the Partnership Agreements and the programmes and annexes with questionnaires for interviews and surveys;
2. **2 Interim reports:** one intermediate report covering Task 2 (including an interim mapping of the content of all Partnership Agreements and available programmes, provided through electronic database) and another one covering Tasks 3 and 4;

3. **Draft final report:** it shall consist of an executive summary and the draft report itself covering Tasks 2-4 (including the final version of the electronic mapping, based on the 28 Partnership Agreements and all the programmes adopted at the time of delivering the draft final report).
4. **Final report:** it shall include the final report itself (no more than 50 pages plus annexes) addressing all the specific objectives (A-C) of the study as well as the final version of the database mentioned before. It shall also include an abstract of no more than 200 words, a publishable executive summary of maximum 6 pages, both in English and French, key words to facilitate web referecing of the study. It should finally include a power-point summarising the results and conclusions.

All the different deliverables shall be submitted in English in an easily accessible style. French versions have to be provided for the Executive Summary and the abstract only. Detailed information on the format is provided at point 11.8 in the Specifications for the Competitive Multiple Framework Services Contract.

Each deliverable will be examined by the Commission (a DG REGIO-led steering group), which may ask for additional modifications or propose changes in order to redirect the work if necessary. Deliverables must be approved by the Commission. The Commission has 60 days in total to approve deliverables and make the related payment. The Contractor shall have 10 working days in which to submit additional information or a new deliverable if requested by the Commission.

The specific deadline for each deliverable is specified below. The study envisages several meetings in Brussels with the steering group in relation to the deliverables.

After the approval of the final report by the European Commission, the contractor will be expected to give an oral presentation of its final report, highlighting its main results and conclusions. This presentation will take place in Brussels and within Commission premises.

End month	Deliverable/ Meeting	Output
0	M1	Kick-off meeting with the Commission services
1.5	D1	Tasks 1 (methodological report)
2	M2	Meeting to discuss the methodological report
7	D2	First interim report covering task 2
7.5	M3	Meeting to discuss interim report (Task 2) with the Commission services
9	D3	Second interim report covering tasks 3 and 4
9.5	M4	Meeting to discuss interim report (Tasks 3 and 4) with the Commission services
12	D4	Draft final report
12.5	M5	Meeting to discuss first draft final report with the Commission services
14	D5	Final report
14+1		Oral presentation of final report

A hard copy and an electronic version of draft versions of reports are required. For the final report three hard copies and an electronic version (three CDs, Word format and PDF format or equivalent application compatible with MS Office) are required. The electronic mapping of how the new provisions of the 2014-2020 regulatory framework are reflected in the Partnership Agreements and the programmes should be provided under Excel format.

3.5. Composition of the team

As part of the tender documentation, the team to be involved in this study should be identified, describing their skills and qualifications, quantifying the input of each member of the team in terms of days and explaining the distribution of tasks between the different team members involved.

In accordance with the specifications set out in the framework contract, the team should include members with an expertise in the areas covered by the ERDF, the CF and for multi-fund programmes, the ESF.

3.6. Duration

The execution of the tasks shall not exceed 14 months starting from the day of the signature of the contract by both parties.

4. AWARD CRITERIA

The Specific Contract will be awarded to the tender that is the **most economically advantageous**. This will be determined in the light of the price and the quality of the tender.

The tenders will be ranked with the following formula so as to determine the most economically advantageous bids.

- **Weighting for quality: 50**
- **Weighting for price: 50**

The successful tenderer will be the tenderer with the lowest ratio of total cost to the quality mark achieved (cost/points).

The quality will be determined on the basis of the four award quality criteria below.

- 1) understanding of the tasks as defined above in the request to submit (max 30 points);
- 2) quality of the methodology proposed (max 30 points) to address each task;
- 3) organisation proposed to respond in terms of timing and quality to the request for required missions (max 20 points);
- 4) the composition of the team proposed to respond to the overall scope of the contract (max 20 points).

5. BUDGET

The maximum amount of the contract is EUR 450.000.

6. CONTENT AND PRESENTATION OF BIDS

6.1. Technical offer

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.

6.2. Financial offer

Prices for Specific Contracts will be presented as a lump-sum on the basis of the expert prices and fixed travel and subsistence costs established according to the price schedules annexed to the Framework Contract. No separate reimbursable expenses will be accepted.

The financial offer must be submitted in the template provided in annex.

7. FORMAT OF THE SPECIFIC CONTRACT

The Specific Contract will be drawn up in accordance with the standard format as in the Framework Contract. The contract will come into force the day of its signature by the contracting authorities for the individual assignment. The breakdown of the prices, the Specific Terms of Reference as well as the offer, form an integral part of the Specific Contract. Any expense incurred by the Contractor before the date of signature of the Contracting Authorities is not eligible for funding.

8. ASSIGNEMENT IMPLEMENTATION

The Contractor, who is notified that his offer is accepted in the form of a Specific Contract, is responsible for all administration in relation to the assignment. He must ensure that all logistic aspects of the assignment are correctly carried out. The Contractor is also responsible for all administrative aspects such as contracting the experts, provision of insurance etc. Ensuring the quality of the assignment is one of the key responsibilities of the Contractor as he is fully responsible for the quality of the reports or/and other outputs required. These documents will be delivered physically by and under the responsibility of the Contractor. In the case of a consortium, quality control is the ultimate responsibility of the leading partner.

9. MEETINGS WITH THE COMMISSION

A kick-off meeting will be organised between the Contractor and the Commission at the early stage of the project implementation. In addition to this there will be one meeting following the submission of the methodological report, one meeting after the submission of each the interim report and a last one following the submission of the draft final report. See point 3.5 with regard to timing of meetings.

The participation of the Contract Manager will be required in any of the meetings organised. The meetings will take place in Brussels at Commission premises. Video conferences could be also organised.

After the approval of the final report by the European Commission, the contractor will be expected to give an oral presentation of this report in Brussels within Commission premises.

The costs of managing the contract by the Contractor, as well as the travel costs related to all the meetings with Commission (including the oral presentation of the final report) will be carried out with no additional charge and are understood to be incorporated in the offer.

10. PUBLICATION AND DELIVERABLES

Rights concerning the deliverables (reports, studies, impact assessments) foreseen and those relating to their reproduction and publication will remain property of the European Commission. No document based in whole or in part upon the work performed under the contract resulting from this invitation to tender may be published, except with the prior formal written approval of the European Commission.

Please note that all studies produced for the European Commission shall conform to the corporate visual identity of the European Commission by applying the graphic rules set out in the European Commission's Visual Identity Manual, including its logo²².

The Commission is committed to making online information as accessible as possible to the largest possible number of users including those with visual, auditory, cognitive or physical disabilities, and those not having the latest technologies. The Commission supports the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0](#) of the W3C.

For full details on Commission policy on accessibility for information providers, see: http://ec.europa.eu/ipg/standards/accessibility/index_en.htm.

Pdf versions of studies destined for online publication should respect W3C guidelines for accessible pdf documents. See: <http://www.w3.org/WAI/>

The final reports as well as the draft and interim report(s) shall be submitted in English.

An electronic version of all reports (including draft/interim versions) will be required both in Word and PDF format.

10.1. Final Study Report

The final study report shall include:

- an abstract of no more than 200 words, an executive summary of maximum 6 pages, both in English and French, and key words to facilitate web referecing of the study;
- the following standard disclaimer:

“The information and views set out in this [report/study/article/publication...] are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the Commission. The Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this study. Neither the Commission nor any person acting on the Commission’s behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained therein.”

²² The Visual Identity Manual of the European Commission is available upon request. Requests should be made to the following e-mail address: comm-visual-identity@ec.europa.eu

- specific identifiers which shall be incorporated on the cover page provided by the Contracting Authority.

10.2. Publishable executive summary

The publishable executive summary shall be provided in both in English and French and shall include:

- the following standard disclaimer:

“The information and views set out in this [report/study/article/publication...] are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the Commission. The Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this study. Neither the Commission nor any person acting on the Commission’s behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained therein.”

- specific identifiers which shall be incorporated on the cover page provided by the Contracting Authority.

10.3. Graphic requirements

For graphic requirements please refer to the template published with these specifications on the Inforegio website. The cover page shall be filled in by the contractor in accordance with the instructions provided in the template. For further details you may also contact comm-visual-identity@ec.europa.eu.

11. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF SPECIFIC CONTRACTS

Once the work has been concluded and the service delivered, the Contractor will submit to the Commission a "proof of delivery", which will then be signed by the Commission as proof of receipt of each product delivered.

The quality of outputs of each specific contract will be subject to a written quality assessment according to the grid below. The grid may be adapted in accordance with the Commission's evaluation standards.

Quality indicators for the evaluation of the delivered work:

- Understanding of the requirements for the deliverable (40%)
- Completeness of the deliverables (40%)
- Respect of deadlines (20%).

Underperformance and reduction of payments

The quality of the output of the Specific Contract will be assessed as a function of the above quality indicators, up to a maximum of 100 points. If it scores less than 60% based on these quality indicators, it will be rejected for underperformance. In this case, the following will apply:

- **Step 1:**the Commission provides an overview of the failings and a reasonable deadline for remedy and notifies the Contractor accordingly.
- **Step 2:**if no satisfactory remedy is found, within the deadline set by the Commission (satisfactory is defined by at least 70% based on the quality

indicators listed above), the Commission will notify the Contractor of a reduction of payments of *up to* 100%, proportional to the scale of the failure, as follows:

- if the quality score is between 0% to 20%, a reduction of 100% will apply;
- if the quality score is between 21% to 40%, a reduction of 70% will apply;
- if the quality score is between 41% and 50%, a reduction of 50% will apply;
- if the quality score is between 51% and 60%, a reduction of 40% will apply;

In addition to the reduction of payment and in view of the manifest underperformance of the Contractor, the Commission will contact the Contractor whose offer ranked in the second place for the award of the Specific Contract.

12. TERMS OF PAYMENTS

Payments shall be done following the payment terms stipulated in Article 1.4. of the framework contract:

- The first interim payment of 30% will follow the reception of the methodological report (D1).
- The second interim payment of 20% will follow the reception of the first interim report (D2).
- The third interim payment of 20% will follow the reception of the second interim report (D3).
- The balance payment will follow the approval by the Commission of the final report (D5).

Annex – Template for the submission of financial offer

	Junior Expert	Senior Expert	Contract Manager	Administrative assistant	Mission and other direct costs	TOTAL
<i>Number of working days</i>						
<i>Fees (€)</i>	... €	... €	... €	... €		... €
<i>Number of missions to Brussels</i>						
<i>Travel cost to Brussels</i>					... €	
<i>Daily and accommodation allowance</i>					... €	
<i>Total missions cost</i>						... €
<i>Total cost</i>						