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**Competitive Multiple Framework Service Contract  
for the provision of Studies on administrative costs, administrative capacities, IT  
systems and fraud prevention and detection measures (Lot 4)**

**Framework Contracts Nr 2014CE16BAT013 / 2014CE16BAT014 / 2014CE16BAT015**

**Service Request Nr 2015CE16BAT047**

**SPECIFICATIONS**

**1. TITLE OF THE REQUEST FOR SERVICES**

The use of new provisions on simplification during the early implementation 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. In addition, a set of common rules has been established for the Cohesion Policy Funds (ERDF, CF and ESF), the EAFRD and the EMFF (jointly referred to as the European Structural and Investment Funds, ESIF) to streamline their implementation. Another focus of the new regulatory framework as agreed by the co-legislators in December 2013<sup>1</sup> has been to establish rules that simplify the legal framework, enhance

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<sup>1</sup> The regulatory framework for the 2014-2020 programming period comprises the following Regulations:

- 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 (hereafter **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**).

the principle of proportionality and reduce administrative burden both for beneficiaries and for Member States managing the funds. In addition to the general provisions on the reduction of administrative burden and the application of the principle of proportionality<sup>2</sup>, the regulatory framework comprises several concrete simplification measures.

Besides simplification which is directly achieved by specific provisions, the new regulatory framework establishes some simplification options which the Member States can decide to implement. The **first purpose** of the present study is therefore to **map how these simplification options have been taken up** by programmes during the early implementation phase and to assess the impact of changes in the overall delivery mechanism on the administrative burden for beneficiaries and administrative costs for programme authorities. Therefore an evidence-base on how opportunities for simplification have been taken up in programmes financed by the ERDF, CF, ESF, EAFRD and EMFF, should be developed.<sup>3</sup> In addition, a specific qualitative assessment on the uptake of simplified cost options and Joint Action Plans should be performed.

A number of the simplification measures and options featuring in the CPR had already been – in an identical or similar form – part of the European Commission's proposal for a Common Provision Regulation<sup>4</sup>. In order to establish the evidence base for the Commission's proposal and to assess the effectiveness of planned simplification measures, DG REGIO had commissioned two studies in the area of simplification. The first study<sup>5</sup> reviewed the governance and administrative structures and costs at national and regional levels for the ERDF and CF programmes over the 2007-2013 programming period and established an evidence-based picture of the administrative workload and costs in relation to different structures, functions, tasks and programme types (hereafter

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- 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**).

- 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 **ERDF 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**).

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> The analysis and presentation of results shall reflect a balanced approach across operational programmes and the different funds, in particular as regards the analysis of mono and multi fund operational programmes.

<sup>4</sup> See COM/2011/0615: Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund covered by the Common Strategic Framework and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.

<sup>5</sup> "Regional governance in the context of globalisation – reviewing governance mechanisms & administrative costs. Administrative workload and costs for Member State public authorities of the implementation of ERDF and Cohesion Fund", DG Regional Policy (June 2010).

SWECO (2010)). Thus the study has established a baseline for administrative costs of national and regional authorities.

The second study<sup>6</sup> measured the impact of changing regulatory requirements to administrative cost and burden in the area of ERDF and CF (hereafter t33/SWECO (2012)) using the baselines established for the administrative costs in the SWECO (2010) study and establishing new baselines for administrative burden. The abovementioned studies tested regulatory changes to be included in the Commission's legislative proposals and covered a large part of the simplification measures that have finally been agreed for the 2014-2020 period, but some elements introduced by the CPR have not been part of the assessment.

Within the same context, DG AGRI had commissioned a study on administrative burden associated with the implementation of certain Rural Development measures, hereafter CAP Pillar II (2011)<sup>7</sup>.

The **second purpose** of the present study therefore is to **assess in monetary terms for all ESI Funds the scope of reduction of administrative burden and costs against the final outcome of the legislative negotiations**. The study should quantify the reduction of administrative costs and burden by the respective elements of the 2014-2020 legal framework and compare it to the 2007-2013 baseline as established in the SWECO (2010) and t33/SWECO (2012) studies for the ERDF and CF and available studies concerning the other Funds. Where no baseline values are available for specific areas, the study should establish new baselines. In case of simplification options that Member States can decide to take up, the study should determine which potential for simplification has been realised in practical as well as in monetary terms as compared to the possibilities provided by the regulatory framework for the 2014-2020 period, taking into account that some measures were initially implemented during the 2007-2013 programming period.

In this context, the study should also identify and quantify where the new legal framework as agreed by the co-legislators enhances or limits the potential for the reduction of administrative burden and costs as compared to the initial Commission proposal.

**Finally**, the study should also look at the creation of additional administrative burden and costs **resulting from rules at national or regional level which go beyond what is strictly required by Union legislation**.

The findings will feed into the Commission's assessment of the effectiveness of the introduced simplification and proportionality measures and into further reflections on simplification and proportionality in the future of the policy.

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<sup>6</sup> "Measuring the impact of changing regulatory requirements to administrative cost and administrative burden of managing EU Structural Funds", DG Regional Policy (July 2012).

<sup>7</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/analysis/external/rd-simplification/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/analysis/external/rd-simplification/index_en.htm)

### 3. DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTRACT

#### 3.1. Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of this study is firstly to assess how the simplification possibilities in the new regulatory framework of the European Structural and Investment Funds have been taken up by Member States during the early implementation phase, secondly to compare and quantify the impact of regulatory changes in the overall delivery mechanism on the administrative burden and costs for beneficiaries and programme authorities and thirdly to assess and quantify the potential burden for beneficiaries resulting from additional rules applied at national level. In doing this, the study should fulfil the following specific objectives:

Set out how opportunities for simplification have been **taken up** in the operational programmes, including the identification of the main reasons why certain possibilities have not been taken up by Member States, such as obstacles at national or regional level.

Provide a specific qualitative assessment on the uptake of **simplified cost options** and **Joint Action Plans**<sup>8</sup>.

**Quantify in monetary terms** the actual impact of regulatory changes in the overall delivery mechanism on programme management and control (administrative costs for Member States) and on beneficiaries (costs of administrative burden) and where necessary, establish baseline values.

With regard to **options** for the reduction of administrative costs and administrative burden available to managing authorities, the study should **quantify the potential for the reduction of administrative burden and costs related to the actual take-up of these options**. The results should be presented against the baseline data.

Determine and compare among Member States the degree of and the reasons behind additional national or regional rules which go beyond what is strictly required by Union legislation. Indicate which areas of implementation are predominantly concerned and quantify the additional potential for the reduction of administrative costs and administrative burden.

Provide **conclusions on strengths and weaknesses** with regard to the application of the new provisions on simplification and reduction of administrative burden and cost during the early implementation phase and provide lessons learned in view of the preparation of the next funding period (post 2020). The recommendations should include estimations on the monetary impact on Member States and beneficiaries.

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<sup>8</sup> This objective specifically addresses the need to provide an in-depth analysis of Simplified Cost Options and Joint Actions Plans, but it is assumed that all other objectives will cover simplification possibilities, including SCOs and JAPs.

## 3.2. Methodology

Objectives A to F should be addressed through

- surveys of managing authorities, certifying authorities, audit authorities and, for the EAFRD, paying agencies
- interviews of a representative sample of different types of beneficiaries of the different Funds and the main relevant actors at national level
- case studies on each simplified cost option and their methodologies as well as on Joint Action Plans and all the relevant aspects of Article 14 ESF Regulation
- desk studies of relevant rules on procedure and eligibility of programmes and a literature review.

At least the following main simplification measures introduced or strengthened by the new Regulations should be covered by the study:

- A set of common rules applicable to the five European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) in the CPR, in particular the use of multifund operational programmes and multifunded CLLD strategies,
- Greater thematic concentration (Art. 9 CPR and fund specific Regulations)
- Implementation of projects under community-led local development (Art. 33 CPR)
- Simplified cost options (e.g. Art. 67 and 68 CPR standard scales of unit costs, lump sums, flat-rate financing, and Article 14 ESF Regulation)
- Joint Action Plans (Art. 104 – 109 CPR)
- E-cohesion (Art. 122(3) CPR) and use of e-Governance for Rural development<sup>9</sup>
- Option to merge the managing authority and the certifying authority (Art. 123(3) CPR) and, for Rural development the restriction to one paying agency per Member State or region (Art. 7(2) of Regulation 1306/2013) as well as the increased role of the certification bodies in the verification of operations;
- Shorter retention period for documents (Art. 140 CPR)
- Proportionate control (Art. 148 CPR) and sanctions (Article 58 of Regulation 1306/2013)
- Provisions to simplify the selection of operation for certain measures under the EMFF (Art. 27(4) and 49(5) of the EMFF Regulation).
- Furthermore, a number of implementation modalities have changed for example in the reporting on progress in implementation, the handling of major projects, procedures for closing the accounts, see also the main elements for simplification as reflected in the Final Simplification Scoreboard for the MFF 2014-2020<sup>10</sup>.

For all objectives the consultant should differentiate between effects on the level of Member States, operational programmes and on beneficiaries. To assess the administrative burden and costs, the guidelines on impact assessments as set out in Chapter III of the Better Regulation Guidelines<sup>11</sup> shall be used. Where the monetary impact should be quantified, the consultant shall use the EU Standard Cost Model. Where applicable, the results should be displayed in a tabular form by Member State.

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<sup>9</sup> AGRI eGovernance study at EU / MS level study (2012)

<sup>10</sup> COM(2014) 114 final, Annex I Main Points of the Scoreboard in all Policy Areas.

<sup>11</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/guidelines/docs/swd\\_br\\_guidelines\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/guidelines/docs/swd_br_guidelines_en.pdf)

### 3.3. Tasks

The study covers seven 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 2-7 are aligned to the objectives of the study set out in section 3.1.

#### **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.

With regard to interviews and surveys the methodological report should 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, for Cohesion policy, all three categories of regions for operational programmes financed by the ERDF, CF and ESF. The sample of programmes should cover a proportionate selection of cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation programmes. 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.

With regard to surveys, the methodological report should in particular explain the methodology and procedure to conduct surveys in the relevant languages. Draft questionnaires to be used for surveys and a description of the planned methodologies for analysing their results should be provided in an annex.

The contractor shall set out by Fund its approach for the quantification of the administrative burden and cost.

#### **Task 2: Set out how opportunities for simplification have been taken up in the programmes, including the identification of the main reasons why certain possibilities have not been taken up by Member States.**

Provide a comprehensive overview of the extent to which the simplification opportunities have been used.

The analysis shall cover at least the following areas:

- Greater thematic concentration (Art. 9 CPR and fund specific Regulations)
- Implementation of projects under community-led local development (Art. 33 CPR)
- Simplified cost options (e.g. Art. 67 CPR standard scales of unit costs, lump sums, flat-rate financing, and Article 14 ESF Regulation)
- Joint Action Plans (Art. 104 – 109 CPR)
- E-cohesion (Art. 122(3) CPR) and e-Governance for Rural Development  
Including the questions to what extent the use of e-cohesion/e-Governance has been made obligatory for beneficiaries, whether there still a duplicating paper trail and whether these systems are also used for other regional/national/EU funding schemes (spill-over)
- Option to merge the managing authority and the certifying authority (Art. 123(3) CPR) and, for Rural development restriction to one paying agency per Member State or region (Art. 7(2) of Regulation 1306/2013),
- Shorter retention period for documents (Art. 140 CPR)
- Provisions to simplify the selection of operations for certain measures under the EMFF (Art. 27(4) and 49(5) of the EMFF Regulation).

In addition, the contractor should identify and evaluate for each ESI Fund other simplification measures that go beyond the measures listed above (e.g. reduction of the number of programmes, of intermediate bodies, of priority axes or of measures).

Where simplification options have been used, the contractor shall analyse which were the expected benefits and difficulties for managing authorities in the set-up and implementation.

Where simplification options have not been used, the contractors shall determine the main factors that prevented managing authorities from using them (e.g. conflicting national/regional laws, expected difficulties in changing the system, assumed low impact, etc.).

Task 2 should be addressed through surveys of managing authorities of all programmes financed by the ERDF, the CF, the ESF, cooperation programmes financed by the ERDF, programmes financed by the EAFRD and the EMFF. In addition, 85 interviews of the main relevant actors at national level (through a selection of relevant ministries/services/bodies in the 28 Member States and Managing authorities) should be conducted.

The findings should be summarised in an overview table which facilitates comparisons between different Member States, programmes and Funds.

***Task 3: Provide a specific qualitative assessment on the uptake of simplified cost options and Joint Action Plans.***

With regard to simplified cost options (Art. 67 CPR standard scales of unit costs, lump sums, flat-rate financing, Article 14 ESF Regulation and the simplified cost options foreseen in the previous programming period) the contractor shall explore by each of the ESI Funds which types of simplified costs have been used the most and categorise for which projects or types of projects, and for the EAFRD, under which measures, simplified cost options are used the most. The contractor should assess how these measures have (or are expected to have) helped to speed up the implementation and the reimbursement of the Funds.

With regard to Joint Action Plans (Art. 104 – 109 CPR) and the standard scales of unit costs and lump sums set out by Article 14(1) ESF Regulation, the consultant shall categorise the types of projects suitable for Joint Actions Plans and Article 14.1 ESF Delegated Acts. The contractor shall evaluate the risks and opportunities for simplified cost options and Joint Action Plans and formulate recommendations regarding what Member States should do to improve the situation, what the Commission should do to support MS and regarding future development of the tool at EU level.

In addition to the surveys and interviews mentioned in task 2, task 3 should be addressed by three case studies on each simplified cost option (standard scales of unit costs; lump sums; flat-rate financing) and an additional case-study should be done on the mandatory use of SCOs as set out by Article 14(4) ESF. The case studies should be illustrated with examples of where innovative or 'best practice' use of SCOs has been made.

***Task 4: Quantify in monetary terms the actual impact of regulatory changes in the overall delivery mechanism on programme management and control (administrative costs for Member States) and on beneficiaries (costs of administrative burden).***

In the first instance this should be done by updating and expanding the study "Measuring the impact of changing regulatory requirements to administrative cost and administrative burden of managing EU Structural Funds" (hereafter t33/SWECO (2012)) to include all elements contained in the legal framework establishing the basis for the European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF) finally agreed by the co-legislators. The results

should be compared with the baseline data available for the 2007-2013 period. This shall include the analysis of the costs of controls.

For other changes in the regulatory framework that were not part of the t33/SWECO (2012) study, the study should be updated by establishing the additional baselines needed and then quantifying the impact of the relevant changes in monetary terms. As a result, the maximum simplification potential of the new regulatory framework should be determined. In order to facilitate comparison between former studies and the present study, the consultant should use as far as possible the same methodology and structure (e.g. the presentation by specific simplification measure) as used in the t33/SWECO (2012) study.

Where significant differences between the final outcome of negotiations and the European Commission's proposal for a Common Provision Regulation are detected, these should be described and quantified in monetary terms. For this task, the consultant shall take into account the Final Simplification Scoreboard for the MFF 2014-2020.

Task 4 should be addressed by using the abovementioned surveys and interviews.

The consultants will establish the methodology for baselines taking into account the available baselines and data sources for each Fund.

As regards the **ERDF and CF** the baseline values as established in the SWECO (2010) and t33/SWECO (2012) studies referred to above should be used. Where baseline values are not available these should be established by using the same methodology as used in the abovementioned studies in order to ensure comparability.

As regards the **ESF**, the baseline values as established in the EPEC/COWI (2012) report '[Study Measuring Current and Future Requirements on Administrative Cost and Burden of Managing the ESF<sup>12</sup>](#)' should be used. Where baseline values are not available these should be established by using the same methodology as used in the abovementioned studies in order to ensure comparability.

As regards the **EAFRD**, the study should assess in monetary terms (costs) the impact of the information obligations as required by the new regulatory framework and compare it with the baselines figures as established in the CAP Pillar II (2011) study. The correspondence between the measures under the scope of the CAP Pillar II (2011) study and the new legal framework should be established by making reference to Annex I of Regulation (EU) No 807/2014. In addition to the measures under the scope of that study, the business start-up aid for young farmers and habitat conservation should also be covered and the baseline should be established applying the same methodology. Finally, the costs of controls in the implementation of the new regulatory framework will use as a baseline the figures for the years 2013 and 2014 to be provided by DG AGRI.

As regards the **EMFF** where no baseline values are available new baselines should be estimated by extrapolation, taking into account the changes in the delivery system from the programming period 2007-2013 to 2014-2020.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=9119&langId=en>



**Task 5: With regard to options for the reduction of administrative costs and administrative burden available to managing authorities, the study should quantify the potential for the reduction of administrative burden and costs related to the actual take-up of these options. The results should be presented against the baseline data.**

By using the same methodology and documents as described in task 4, the consultant shall compare in monetary terms the maximum simplification potential with the actually implemented simplification options as taken up by Member States and regions. This comparison should also include the baseline data for the 2007-2013 period. The results should be displayed by option.

This analysis should also cover the monetary impact of the reduction of the number of programmes, of intermediate bodies, of priority axes or of measures as well as the monetary advantages and disadvantages of multi-fund programmes. The findings should be summarised in an overview table which facilitates comparisons between different Member States and Operational Programmes.

The task implies that the contractor will measure what has been achieved, or is expected to be achieved, in terms of reduction of administrative burden in the light of what has been done, or is planned to be done. Also, the benefits for those Member States/regions which have implemented simplification possibilities against those Member States/regions which have not implemented simplification possibilities should be displayed.

Task 5 should be addressed by the abovementioned surveys and interviews, using the baseline values as set out in task 4.

**Task 6: Determine and compare among Member States the degree of and the reasons behind additional national or regional rules which go beyond what is strictly required by Union legislation. Indicate which areas of implementation are predominantly concerned and quantify the additional potential for the reduction of administrative costs and administrative burden.**

The contractor shall analyse the scope of this phenomenon and determine the expected monetary impact of additional national or regional rules, i.e. the phenomenon that national or regional administrations put in place laws or rules that are stricter than the minimum required at EU-level to guarantee regular and legal expenditure. The contractor shall analyse the reasons for this phenomenon (e.g. historically strict rules or mitigations of financial risks by resorting to conservative interpretations of EU Regulations) and provide recommendations how to address the issue.

The findings should be summarised in an overview table which facilitates comparison between different Member States, programmes and Funds.

Task 6 should be addressed by desk studies of relevant rules on procedure and eligibility of 40 cohesion policy programmes, 15 rural development programmes and 5 operational programmes financed by the EMFF. In addition surveys of a representative sample of beneficiaries covering all Member States and a representative selection of programmes should be conducted.

**Task 7: Provide conclusions on strengths and weaknesses with regard to the application of the new provisions on simplification and reduction of administrative burden and cost during the early implementation phase and draw conclusions and recommendations for the next funding period (post 2020). The recommendations should include estimations on the monetary impact on Member States and beneficiaries.**

The contractor shall provide conclusions on strengths and weaknesses with regard to the application of the new provisions on simplification and the reduction of administrative costs and burden during the early implementation phase. The conclusions shall cover a

first assessment of their value with a view to simplification and proportionality and recommendations on how to enhance their acceptance and implementation at regional/national level. The conclusions should also assess how these measures have (or are expected to have) helped to speed up the implementation and the reimbursement of the Funds.

The contractor shall also explore additional options for simplification with a view to a further reduction of the administrative burden and costs for the next funding period. These additional options should cover the programme management level (e.g. further reduction of programmes, intermediate bodies, reduction of priority axes, focus areas or measures, management verifications, etc.) and the level of beneficiaries (e.g. project application, payment claims, retention of documents).

Task 7 should be addressed by using and interpreting the results of the work on tasks 2 to 6. The findings should be supported by references to relevant literature<sup>13</sup>, where appropriate.

### 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, as set out under task 1.
2. **Four Interim reports:**
  - (a) first interim report covering task 2 and covering the progress of the work on tasks 4 and 5,
  - (b) second interim report covering task 3 (except for the case studies which can be delivered in the draft final report)
  - (c) third interim report covering tasks 4 and 5
  - (d) fourth interim report covering tasks 6 and 7;
3. **Draft final report:** covering tasks 2 to 7 as well as an executive summary of the entire draft report itself (tasks 2 to 7). It should also include in the annexes the case-studies of task 3;
4. **Final report:** it shall include the final report itself (no more than 150 pages plus annexes) addressing all the specific objectives (A-F) of the study. 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 referencing 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. Within the steering group DG EMPL will take the lead on

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<sup>13</sup> The final report should include a separate list of literature/studies on the topic.

task 3 and the related deliverable. 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 and starts on the date of the entry into force of the specific contract. 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.

The contractor is expected to attend 6 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.

End month	Deliverable/ Meeting	Output
0	M1	Kick-off meeting with the Commission services
<b>1.5</b>	<b>D1</b>	<b>Methodological report (task 1)</b>
2	M2	Meeting to discuss the methodological report
<b>6</b>	<b>D2+D3</b>	<b>First interim report covering task 2 (D2) and covering the progress of the work on tasks 4 and 5</b> <b>Second interim report covering task 3 (D3)</b>
6.5	M3	Meeting to discuss first and second interim report (task 2 and 3) with the Commission services
<b>7.5</b>	<b>D4</b>	<b>Third interim report covering tasks 4 and 5</b>
8	M4	Meeting to discuss second interim report (tasks 4 and 5) with the Commission services
<b>10.5</b>	<b>D5</b>	<b>Fourth interim report covering tasks 6 and 7</b>
11	M5	Meeting to discuss third interim report (task 6) with the Commission services
<b>12</b>	<b>D6</b>	<b>Draft final report (covering tasks 2 to 7)</b>
12.5	M6	Meeting to discuss first draft final report with the Commission services
<b>13</b>	<b>D7</b>	<b>Final report</b>
13+1		Oral presentation of final report

A hard copy and an electronic version of draft versions of reports are required. For the final report four hard copies and an electronic version (four 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, the ESF, EAFRD and the EMFF. At least one member of the team should have relevant experience regarding simplified cost options.

### **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 three award quality criteria below.

- quality of the methodology proposed (max 50 points) to address each task;

Tenderers should provide a synthetic and exhaustive description of the approaches they intend to use for this study and the methods they intend to follow. This description should be detailed to the level of the different Funds to be covered. The work packages envisaged shall be precisely described, including elements such as the sources of information, collection of data and analytical tools employed.

- organisation proposed to respond in terms of timing and quality to the request for required missions (max 30 points);

Tenderers should provide a synthetic and exhaustive description of the approaches they intend to use towards project management. It should also describe the global allocation of time and resources to the project and to each task and the rationale behind the choice of this allocation.

- the composition of the team proposed to respond to the overall scope of the contract (max 20 points).

The description should provide details on how the roles and responsibilities of the proposed team and of the economic operators (including joint tenders and subcontractors if applicable) are distributed for each task and how the work of different team members or sub-teams will be coordinated.

## **5. BUDGET**

The maximum amount of the contract is EUR 700.000.

## **6. CONTENT AND PRESENTATION OF BIDS**

### **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.

### **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. ASSIGNMENT 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 logo<sup>14</sup>.

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](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.

### **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;

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<sup>14</sup> 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](mailto:comm-visual-identity@ec.europa.eu)

- 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.

### **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](mailto:comm-visual-identity@ec.europa.eu).

## **11. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF SPECIFIC CONTRACTS**

The quality assessment shall be done as stipulated in Annex 1, point 10.9 of the framework 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 40% will follow the reception of the third interim report (D4).
- The balance payment will follow the approval by the Commission of the final report (D7).

### 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<sup>(*)</sup></i>						
<i>Travel cost to Brussels</i>					... €	
<i>Daily and accommodation allowance</i>					... €	
<i>Total missions cost</i>						... €
<b><i>Total cost</i></b>						... €

<sup>(\*)</sup> The number of missions indicated should be the sum of the number of staff multiplies by the number of meetings proposed (e.g.: 3 people coming on 5 meetings in Brussels + 2 people coming on 2 meetings → 19 missions).