



Specifications – Invitation to tender NO VT/2011/009

Framework contract on Helpdesk and other support services to the EURES Portal

1. Title of the contract

Framework contract on Helpdesk and other support services to the EURES Portal.
Contract reference No VT/2011/009.

2. Background

EURES is a tool to support the European Employment Strategy to create more and better jobs throughout the EU meeting the headline employment target of 75 % by 2020. The European Employment Strategy will be implemented in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and the two key flagship initiatives the "New Skills and Jobs Agenda" and "Youth on the Move" which define the operational objectives in the coming years 2011-2012.

2.1 EURES - objectives

The mission of EURES is to improve the functioning of the European labour market by facilitating the exercise of the right to the free movement of labour (one of the basic rights of the European citizen as set out in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union), by providing actual access to more job opportunities and by making a contribution to overcoming bottlenecks and shortages on European labour markets. EURES thus contributes to achieving the objectives on geographical and occupational mobility set by the European Employment Strategy under the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The EURES co-operation is legally based on

- Article 46 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
- Council Regulation (EEC) 1612/68, part II
- Commission Decision 2003/8/EC of 23 December 2002 (Official Journal L 5 of 10 January 2003) implementing Council Regulation (EEC) No. 1612/68 as regards the clearance of vacancies and applications for employment
- The EURES Charter defines the EURES activities to be carried out and establishes the operational objectives and quality standards to be applied
- The EURES Guidelines, adopted every three years, describe the overall objectives for the time period concerned

2.2 EURES – operation

EURES was launched in 1994 as a network for co-operation between the Public Employment Services (PES) of the Member States, their partners and the Commission to exchange information concerning vacancies and applications for employment, information on the state and trends of the labour market as well as information concerning living and working conditions. EURES aims to inform, advise



and assist European citizens who want to work in another country and employers to recruit from abroad.

The EURES co-operation has been fully extended to EU/EEA countries (the EU Member States plus Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland). Switzerland also co-operates within the EURES framework in accordance with the Agreement of 21 June 1999 between the European Community and Switzerland on the free movement of persons.

The services of EURES consist of information, advice and assistance for placement, recruitment along with matching CVs and vacancies. The tasks related to recruitment, placement and matching will get more emphasis in order to address real needs of the EURES clients and provide measurable outcomes.

EURES has a **human network** of EURES advisers to provide the information required by jobseekers and employers through personal contact. There are currently more than 850 EURES advisers located throughout the EU/EEA. EURES advisers are trained specialists who provide the three basic EURES services of information, guidance and placement, to both jobseekers and employers interested in the European job market. EURES advisers also contribute to the integration of EURES services within their organisations, mainly the Member States' PES, and provide training and support for other staff.

To match the needs of jobseekers and employers, EURES has developed a **jobs database** that originally contained vacancies of particular interest to non-nationals. The Employment Guidelines, adopted by the Council in July 2003, specified that by 2005 jobseekers throughout the EU should be able to consult *all* job vacancies advertised through Member States' employment services. The Member States have gradually adapted their systems to the new technical platform so that virtually all their vacancies can now be accessed via the EURES Portal. The Portal thus connects job vacancies databases in 30 countries and a user can access, in real time, more than a million job vacancies. In addition to the jobs database there also is a **CV online database**, where jobseekers can post their CVs to be viewed by registered employers.

Both databases are available on the **EURES Job Mobility Portal** (<http://eures.europa.eu>). It aims to provide a user-friendly means of accessing the information needed for those contemplating a move for career or for learning purposes. The portal is now available in all 25 official EU/EEA languages and attracts more than 4.000.000 visitors per month.

As well as providing information on available jobs throughout the EU/EEA and the possibility for jobseekers to post their CVs online, the Portal provides information on living and working conditions, labour market developments (tracking shortages and surpluses of labour), and on education and training opportunities (via the PLOTEUS site run by the Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture).

Following the enlargements of the European Union in 2004 and 2007, EURES serves as an important focal point for information concerning, among other things, the transitional rules that apply for the free movement of workers between new and old Member States. Transitional arrangements may still apply for some time, with possible future enlargements of the European Union.



The Extranet section of the Portal, available for EURES advisers and other members of the EURES network (in total more than 2.000 users), contains document repositories, directories, forums and a number of other practical tools and utilities to facilitate internal communication within the EURES network.

A EURES Helpdesk providing quick and accurate answers to information requests from jobseekers, employers and others on job mobility issues in general and on the European Job Mobility portal in particular is accessible via a European free phone number and e-mail.

The European Commission's Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL) is responsible for co-ordinating and supporting the EURES network.

3. *Subject of the contract*

The purpose of this contract is to provide a modern helpdesk service to give help and assistance to users of the EURES Portal, including members of the EURES network. The role of the EURES helpdesk is to provide quick and accurate answers to information requests from jobseekers, employers and other users on job mobility issues in general and on the EURES Portal in particular. The indicative total amount to be paid by the Commission under the Contract is EUR 400.000 for two years covering all tasks executed,

4. *Participation*

Please note that:

The competition is open to any physical person or legal entity coming within the scope of the Treaties and any other physical person or legal entity from a third country which has concluded with the Union a specific agreement in the area of public contracts, under the conditions provided for in that agreement.

Where the Multilateral Agreement on Public Contracts concluded within the framework of the WTO applies, the contracts are also open to nationals of States that have ratified this Agreement, under the conditions provided for therein. It should be noted that research and development services, which come under category 8 of Annex II A of Directive 2004/18/CE, are not covered by this Agreement.

5. *Tasks to be carried out by the Contractor*

The helpdesk replies to all kinds of enquires relating to the services provided on the EURES Portal, including the Extranet section, and to questions on practical aspects of job mobility within Europe in general, received by e-mail, telephone or any other current or future means of electronic message delivery.

Most requests are currently sent by e-mail. A free phone number accessible in all EU/EEA countries provides free of charge telephone access to the helpdesk. E-mails are sent to an address at the Commission from which they immediately are automatically forwarded to the Contractor's mailbox. The helpdesk should also be able to receive enquires via Voice over IP telephony (VOIP) as well as via an online



"chat" functionality on the EURES portal. Details of the requests and the replies should be registered in a "Work flow / Management system" so that they can easily be identified, reproduced and included in regular statistics and feedback to the Commission.

Answers are mainly given on the basis of standard replies provided by or drawn up in co-operation with the Commission. The reply to many of the requests will consist of or include a reference to other sources of information on European and/or national level such as EURES advisers, the Euroguidance network, Europe Direct, Your Europe Advice, SOLVIT, Enterprise Europe, etc.

Standard replies, modular elements for answers, contact information etc. in the official languages of the EU/EEA to be used for all general questions should be stored in a "knowledge database" developed and maintained by the Contractor.

5.1 Description of the tasks

The service under the Contract will consist of the following main elements:

- Reception and registration of requests in a Workflow / Management system
- Replying to requests, on the basis of information provided by the Commission, which the Contractor must incorporate into a "knowledge database" to allow easy retrieval and tracking, and to ensure best possible quality of the answers
- Providing feedback and statistics on both requests and replies to the Commission
- Handling of complaints and abuse reports on services provided by the EURES Portal and the EURES network in general
- Providing information for and editing Website FAQs and/or problem alerts.

In addition, the helpdesk will, on request, be required to undertake some administrative tasks in connection with the EURES portal, such as

- Verification and approval of pending user registration requests from employers, jobseekers and Extranet (Intranet for the EURES network) users
- Management of lost user IDs and passwords for jobseekers, employers and Extranet (Intranet for the EURES network) users
- Reception and registration of requests for publications and information material
- Reporting on faults and errors concerning the functioning of the EURES portal (see 5.1.3 below)
- Monitoring and moderation of online discussion forums for users of the EURES portal.

The Contractor may also be asked to participate in EURES training sessions organised by the Commission's training provider to inform about the activities and services provided by the helpdesk.

5.1.1 Reception and registration of requests

For every request received by the helpdesk, be it by e-mail, telephone or online, the date and time of reception, country, language and contact details of the requestor as well as a short summary of the nature of the request must be registered in the Work flow / Management system maintained by the Contractor. In the case of telephone calls that can be answered immediately, the contact details may be left out.



The Contractor should immediately discard any junk, promotional or any other types of e-mails or other requests received which do not relate to the activities of EURES or the European Union in general. These messages should not be registered or replied to.

E-mail messages may arrive in any of the official languages of the EU/EEA (See 5.3 below). Registration of data needs to be done in English.

A notification of receipt, in the same language as the request, provided that it is one of the official languages, and otherwise in English, should be dispatched to the sender without delay.

5.1.2 *Replying to requests*

Replies will be prepared by the helpdesk mainly on the basis of information and standard replies provided by the Commission, incorporated into the Contractor's knowledge database.

Replies must be sent as quickly as possible and should, as a principle, be in the language of the initial request, provided that it is one of the official EU/EEA languages.

As a minimum requirement, a written reply should be sent within three working days. In case the Contractor cannot answer within three working days (see category B and category C below) a holding reply must be sent within three working days. A complete reply must be sent within 15 working days from the date of receipt. If the Contractor has transmitted (escalated) a question to the Commission or elsewhere for reply or research (category C) the case should still be considered as open, and the Contractor must carefully watch, and if necessary make reminders so that the 15 day limit can be upheld.

The required service level is that at least 50% of the written questions received in English, French or German are fully replied within 1 working day and that 100% of the questions are replied either fully or by the dispatch of holding replies within 3 working days.

Telephone calls must be handled as promptly as possible. The helpdesk must be able to answer incoming telephone calls in at least English, French and German at any given point of time during opening hours (see 5.2 below). If an oral answer cannot be given immediately, or if the request requires a detailed reply, contact details must be taken and a written answer provided, within the same deadlines as for written requests.

Information request received online, via the "chat" functionality or otherwise should in this respect be considered as telephone calls.

For the purposes of invoicing, provision of statistics and quality control each request for information will be classified under one of the three categories A-C defined below, each of which involving the tasks described above. The Commission reserves the right to refuse the classification assigned to a particular request by the Contractor, and may in particular refuse to reply to a request classified by the Contractor as category C, if the Contractor is deemed capable of replying directly himself.



The calculation of the offered price should be based on the workload expressed as number of Work Units (WU), where a request category A corresponds to 1 WU, a request B to 3 WU and a request C to 2 WU (see 11 below).

Category A - Standard answers

A standard answer exists, or needs only a minor modification, and can be dispatched within 5 minutes. This category also covers the forwarding of requests to identified contacts e.g. within the EURES network or the European institutions, such as the Europe Direct service, and informing the sender that the request has been forwarded to this contact. Requests may only be forwarded if it is obvious that the request can and will be handled and answered by the contact to which it is forwarded.

Action required:

- Analyse question and dispatch notification of receipt
- Look up correct standard answer in the language of the query in the knowledge database
- Make necessary modifications to the standard answer
- Dispatch the answer by the appropriate channel
- Log and archive

Examples of currently used standard answers can be provided to interested tenderers on request.

Category B – Specific answers

A personalised reply can be prepared on the basis of existing documentation and other information at the disposal of the helpdesk, requiring an average processing time of 15 minutes.

Action required:

- Analyse question and dispatch notification of receipt
- Refer to documentation and other information sources of relevance, such as other Commission information and advice services
- Formulate answer in appropriate language
- Dispatch answer by appropriate channel
- Log and archive, if relevant adding new elements for reply to the knowledge database

Category C - Complex answers

Queries not foreseen in the documentation provided by the Commission

Action required:

- Analyse question and dispatch notification of receipt



- Transmit to the Commission for reply or research, or to identified contacts within the Institutions with copy to the Commission, indicating elements for which reply is required.
- Prepare reply based on information received from the Commission/ identified contacts
- Dispatch answer by appropriate channel
- Log and archive, adding new elements for reply to the knowledge database from the reply provided by the Commission or other identified contacts

For Category C, complex answers, the Commission may reply directly, copying the answer to the helpdesk, or may define the elements necessary for the helpdesk to reply as a Category B specific answer. In either case, the reply should be added to the knowledge database, for future use.

Registration of telephone calls and online information requests

Telephone calls and online chat sessions in English, French and German that do not exceed 5 minutes and where a reply can be given immediately should be considered as category A, standard answers. For requests involving a more detailed or lengthy answer, or in a language other than English, French or German, a contact address should be registered, and the inquiry then handled as a written request, of category A, B, or C as appropriate.

These requests and replies by telephone must also be logged and archived as all other requests.

Technical questions

The queries described above under A-C may also include technical questions about the functioning of the system, reception of anomaly reports, suggestions for improvements etc. The helpdesk should, even if it subsequently passes on problems to more specialised services (systems support, software engineering, etc), must be able to:

- . diagnose the problem and reach an appropriate conclusion,
- . answer most of the questions directly by e-mail or telephone,
- . express the problems defined by the customer in a language, which can be understood by the technicians, and vice-versa.

Exceptionally, in order to identify a problem, and/or advise on the correct action to be taken by the end-user, it may be necessary to guide the end-user through various steps during a telephone conversation or a chat. The average length of such a conversation should not exceed 10 minutes. These requests and replies by telephone/chat must also be registered. Depending on their length and complexity they should be classified as a request under category A-C.

Administrative tasks

The helpdesk will be required to undertake a number of tasks related to the systems administration of the EURES portal, including

- Verification and approval of "My EURES" registration requests from employers, jobseekers and Extranet (Intranet for the EURES network) users



- Management of lost user IDs and passwords for jobseekers, employers and Extranet (Intranet for the EURES network) users
- Reception and registration of requests for publications and information material
- Reporting on faults and errors concerning the functioning of the EURES portal (see 5.1.3 below)

These tasks should normally be classified as requests under category A, but could, depending on their length and complexity, exceptionally be classified as a request under category B-C.

5.1.3 Provision of feedback and statistics on both requests and replies

The Contractor shall provide statistics on the activities every month and on request to the Commission. These statistics shall show the number of requests received, broken down by category A-C as described in detail above, method of transmission, country, language, subject, as well as the delay for responses and length of telephone calls.

The Contractor should provide quarterly an executive summary report containing statistical trends with explanatory text. The data in the executive summary report should at least cover contacts per month, per country, per category (employers, jobseekers, students, EURES network, researches and others) and per way of contact. The data should be supported by graphs. The executive summary report will be part of the overall strategic work plan for EURES.

The quarterly management reports should also include information on all pending requests and the average as well as the maximum time for handling requests. For any request that has not been replied within the stipulated 15 working days, full details as well as a justification for the delay must be supplied.

Details must also be supplied of all additional ad hoc activities carried out under this contract at the Commission's request.

The monthly and quarterly reports must be provided in English as an electronic file in an agreed standard format. Details of all complex questions referred to the Commission or other declared contacts must be supplied with the monthly statistics, as well as examples of the main types of questions and replies handled during the month in question. Individual reports and analysis must be available at short notice if requested.

The Contractor will immediately inform the Commission and contacts for technical support identified and agreed by the Commission, of any faults and problems concerning the functioning of the EURES portal, which come to the helpdesk's attention during its normal activity of replying to information requests. The Contractor should also forward to the Commission complaints and other feedback concerning the functioning and quality of services provided by members of the EURES network.

5.1.4 Additional ad hoc tasks

At the Commission's specific request, and in agreement with the Contractor, the helpdesk will be required to carry out various other ad hoc tasks. These ad hoc tasks may include, as a guide,



- Monitoring and moderation of online discussion forums for jobseekers and employers that may be opened on the portal in the future.
- Reception, registration and processing of feedback information received from users
- Tests relating to the performance of the system and services provided
- Sending of e-mail messages to identified groups of users
- Editing and uploading of information to the web site.
- Compilation and dissemination of statistics on the usage of the EURES portal
- Specific customer services at the launch of a new release or service (e.g. extra helpdesk functions, special study on customer reaction)
- Participate in EURES training sessions and other meetings, to present the help desk and its activities.

5.2 Opening hours

The helpdesk should be available between 8.30 a.m. and 6.00 p.m (Central European Time) from Monday to Friday, regardless of national holidays of the country where the helpdesk is physically located. The only days which will be considered holidays where no service is required are: New Year's Day, Easter Monday, Ascension, Whit Monday (Pentecost Monday), All Saints ' Day, Christmas and Boxing Day (according to the Belgian calendar).

5.3 Languages

While the telephone and online "chat" service only needs to be supplied in English, French and German, the helpdesk should be able to handle written information requests in all official languages of the EU/EEA i.e. currently: Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, Estonian, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, Gaelic (Irish), German, Greek, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish and Swedish.

The helpdesk service should be organised in such a way that telephone contacts and written enquiries in English, French and German can be dealt with immediately by the members of the helpdesk team. **The tenderer should describe in detail how written requests in other languages will be handled.** It should be noted that at the present time the vast majority of written request are handled in English, Spanish, German, French, Italian and Romanian.

Basic documentation will be provided by the Commission in all the official languages. The knowledge database must allow the multilingual retrieval of this documentation.

The number of official languages may increase during the life of the contract. The Contractor must be able to extend the linguistic coverage of the service provided, without any additional charges.

As to the language skills of the staff involved, see further below under 14.B. "Technical capacity".

5.4 Infrastructure

The Contractor must maintain the infrastructure necessary to handle all requests, and make any necessary adaptations of this infrastructure at his own expense and at his own location(s) throughout the life of the contract.



This infrastructure includes in particular a Workflow / Management system, a knowledge database, access to the EURES portal, its "back-end". The contractor should provide, by hosting and maintaining, all necessary channels to access the helpdesk via telephone, e-mail, VOIP telephony networks and online chat.

The necessary telephony infrastructure includes the maintenance in all EU/EEA countries and Switzerland of a European or, where not available, national free phone number.

Tools for error reporting, management of lost User IDs and passwords etc., will be provided by the Commission as part of the helpdesk's access to the EURES portal and its back-end application via the Internet.

The Contractor may in the future be asked to provide a facility to redirect certain incoming calls (telephony and VOIP) to national EURES contacts via telephone. This could e.g. be as an option on the voice menu or manually by the helpdesk operators.

The cost of all necessary infrastructures should be included in the global price of the service. The only exception may, if applicable, be the direct costs payable to the involved telephony network operators for the transfer of existing European and national Free phone numbers from the current helpdesk operator and for registration of new such numbers. If redirected of incoming calls incurrent costs, as setting up of the technical application as well as communication cost, these will also be considered as expenses eligible for reimbursement.

5.5 Registration, archive, knowledge database

The Contractor must register all requests, irrespective of how they have been sent and whether they are open or closed, in one single Work flow / Management system comprising details of the date, identity of caller, type and nature of the information request, and action taken. The system must allow a tracking of open pending issues, and should for all individual requests provide information on the actual handling time.

The Contractor should maintain and update a knowledge database containing basic documentation, standard replies and elements thereof and other useful information to ensure an efficient and consistent handling of all incoming inquiries and requests.

The Contractor should without delay inform the Commission as soon as there is a need to update or provide new standard answers or elements for answers and propose any other improvement of the basic documentation. Such information will normally be provided by the Commission in all official languages.

Ideally all these functions should be available in one single management system, but a separate system for the knowledge database is acceptable as long as the helpdesk operators can easily access both systems.

On request, the Contractor must provide full access for the Commission to the Workflow / Management system and the knowledge database.

The tenderer must describe in detail how the proposed Workflow / Management system and the knowledge database will function.



5.6 Data Security

The Contractor undertakes to maintain a sufficient level of security to protect the data held for the Commission from unauthorised access and misuse.

5.7 Data protection

Private data are confidential (see article II.20 of the General conditions applicable to service contracts awarded by the European Commission) and must not be used by the Contractor, or divulged to third parties, for any purpose other than those foreseen under the Contract.

At the end of the Contract all physical and electronic records pertaining to the correspondence made under the Contract, including the register of calls treated, all identifying details of those contacting the helpdesk, the basic documentation supplied by the Commission, and the full collection of standard replies and elements thereof (the knowledge database) must be returned to the Commission in an agreed format.

5.8 Quality Control

Regular monitoring of the helpdesk's activities will be ensured by the Commission for quality control and overall management purposes. This can include visits to the Contractor's premises or database checks as well as test enquiries.

The outcome of such quality checks will be reported by the Commission, and discussed with the Contractor at the review meetings. The Contractor must offer the Commission unlimited access to the Contractor's Workflow / Management system and the knowledge database, to allow checks at any time on the quantity and registration of requests, and on the quality and classification of the replies provided by the Contractor.

The service quality must comply with the Commission's Code of Good Administrative Behaviour: (http://ec.europa.eu/civil_society/code/index_en.htm). It will be measured on the following points:

- Availability of service
- Quality of language skills
- Accuracy and quality of replies (the helpdesk must provide accurate responses to enquiries of a varied nature)
- Repetition of identical questions (the service quality is considered to be insufficient if identical questions are addressed repeatedly to the Call Centre by the same enquirer within a short period of time. A control mechanism in the caller archive should ensure the identification of repeated similar requests by the same person)
- Consistency (the same question should always meet with the same elements in the reply)
- Politeness and manner of handling enquiries
- Respect of the reply deadlines
- Rationalisation (as the Contractor gains in experience, certain replies should pass to a more simple category of classification)



Random monitoring of the calls and correspondence, test calls and mails as well as enquiries with users will be made by the Commission to control the quality.

5.9 Meetings

The Commission will invite the Contractor to periodical meetings to offer updates on EURES and other relevant Commission activities and to review the volume of work handled by the Contractor. These meetings, that will be organised about two times per year, will be held at the Commissions premises in Brussels and could be attended by at least one member of the helpdesk. The meetings are foreseen to last not more than a full working day. The associated expenses must be included into the overall quarterly fixed fee.

The Contractor may be asked to attend additional specific meetings at the request of the Commission. In this case, any mission expenses incurred by the Contractor will be reimbursed in accordance with the provisions of the Contract.

The Contractor must prepare the minutes of any meetings he attends. These minutes must be approved by the Commission before being distributed.

6 Guidance and indications on tasks execution and methodology

In 2010 the helpdesk received a total number of around 14.000 enquires. For the requests received the following breakdown between categories applied:

A Standard reply	88 %
B Specific reply	11 %
C Complex reply	1%

Around 65 % of the information requests were received by e-mail. More than 30 % of the e-mails were in English, followed by Spanish, German, French, Italian and Romanian accounting for around 10 % each.

Of the telephone calls around 50 % were in English, 18 % in French and 15 % in German.

N.B All figures are given purely as an indication without any commitment on the part of the Commission.

7 Liquidated damages

Article II.16 of the draft Contract provides for that a Contractor that seriously fails to meet contractual obligations may be subject to financial damages.

As stated in Article I.11 (other special conditions) of the draft Contract, the Commission will conduct regular checks on the service offered by the Contractor.

Instances of poor quality, attributable to the Contractor will be recorded and will feature in the review of his performance. If 2 or more occurrences of bad quality such as:

- An abusive or substantially incorrect reply is sent or given by phone,
- An impolite or factually or linguistically inaccurate reply is sent or given by phone,
- The service is not operational for more than 1 hour during normal opening hours,



- Access to the Contractor's archive or knowledge database is refused or technically not possible,
have taken place within any given period of 30 working days, damages may incur of up to 1000 €.

Any delay in the execution of the service for which the Contractor can be held responsible may incur a request for damage of 150 € per stated day of delay beyond 3 working days for the dispatch of a reply or a holding answer and 150 € per stated day of delay beyond 15 working days for a complete reply.

These examples are given only as a guide and should not be considered as an exhaustive list of instances when damages may be imposed.

The Contractor will be required to correct immediately any error detected for which he is responsible.

The damages may if necessary be cumulative.

8. Professional qualifications required

See Annex IV of the draft framework contract, experts' CVs.

Additional requirements:

8.1 Staff skills

See annex IV of the draft framework contract.

The Contractor must ensure that any staff performing the Contract has the professional qualifications and experience required for the execution of the tasks assigned to him or her.

The Contractor shall propose a Project Manager to have on his behalf the overall responsibility for the completion for the execution of the Contract. The Project manager must have documented knowledge and experience of running services similar to those described in points 5-5.9 above . The Contractor must provide CVs of the Project manager and other key personnel responsible for carrying out the Contract and must inform the Commission when there are changes in the key staff.

The helpdesk members should be highly motivated and capable of working in a complex environment, handling multiple issues simultaneously. They must understand the importance of their role, representing EURES, an important and highly visible Commission network in direct contact with the general public and the members of the EURES network, be tactful and have the ability to promptly identify the caller/user needs in order to provide appropriate support or solutions. They need to have the necessary language skills to carry out their tasks (see further below under 14.B. "Technical capacity").

All members of the helpdesk team are expected to have or acquire, through the training mentioned under point 8.2, detailed knowledge of the functioning and operation of the EURES Portal, the EURES network and the principles of free movement of workers with the Economic Area as well as a sound general knowledge of the functioning of the European Union.



Any change of personnel, occurring during the life of the Contract, shall be notified promptly for agreement by the Commission. The Contractor must provide documentation on the person(s) skills by including his or her CV.

8.2 Training

An initial information and training session will be provided by the Commission before the start of the Contract. The training session will have duration of one to two days and will be held in English at the Commission's premises in Brussels or at the Contractor's premises. Attendance is obligatory for all full-time team members and their replacements. An exact timetable and a detailed programme will be provided once the Contract has been signed. During this period the Contractor must acquire the knowledge and expertise necessary to be able to carry out independently the services foreseen under this Contract.

The Contractor must ensure that the knowledge gained by his staff is maintained and further developed. Any new team members must get an appropriate initial training by the Contractor.

9. Time schedule and reporting

See Article I.2. of the draft framework contract.

The Contract is concluded for a period of 24 months with effect from the date of signature. This contractual period and all other periods specified in the Contract are calculated in calendar days unless otherwise indicated.

The Contract may be renewed up to 1 time for a period of 24 months, only before expiration of the Contract and with the express written agreement of the parties. Renewal does not imply modification or deferment of existing obligations.

The Contractor shall provide statistics on the activities every month and on request (See 5.1.3 above).

9.1 Additional requirements (specific deadlines for the performance of tasks):

Within one month following the end of each 24 months period the Contractor shall provide a status report drawn up in English on the operation of the helpdesk service. Apart from biannual statistics on the requests received, the report should, in particular, describe

- any problems encountered during the year,
- measures to maintain and improve the quality of the service
- staff turnover
- training of the staff

10. Payments and standard Contract



In drawing up the bid, the tenderer should take into account the provisions of the standard Contract comprising the "General terms and conditions applicable to service contracts".

Pre-financing

Pre-financing shall only apply for specific orders for services and only if the amount of the single order is above 50.000 EUR.

Within 30 days at the latest of the reception date of the relevant invoice (indicating the reference number of the order it refers to), a pre-financing payment of 30% of the part A of the breakdown of prices of the order shall be made.

Payment of the balance

The request for payment of the balance of the Contractor shall be admissible if accompanied by:

- the final technical report in accordance with the instructions laid down in Annex I of the draft Contract,
- the relevant invoices indicating the reference number of the Contract and of the Order to which they refer,
- statements of reimbursable expenses in accordance with Article II.7 of the draft Contract provided the report has been approved by the Commission.

The Commission shall have 60 days from receipt to approve or reject the report, and the Contractor shall have 30 days in which to submit additional information or a new report.

Within 30 days of the date on which the report is approved by the Commission, payment of the balance corresponding to the relevant invoice shall be made.

11. Prices

Under the terms of Articles 3 and 4 of the Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the European Union, the latter are exempt from all charges, taxes and duties, including value added tax; such charges may not therefore be included in the calculation of the price quoted. The amount of VAT is to be indicated separately.

The price must be stated in EUR(€), net of VAT (using, where appropriate, the conversion rates published in the C series of the Official Journal of the European Union on the day when the invitation to tender was issued), and broken down according to the model in Annex III included in the attached standard contract.

Tenderers are required to submit their prices by using the annexed price schedule form. Tenderers are also required to submit a specimen quotation based on the price schedule and according to the specific scenarios set out in the specimen quotation form. These specimen quotations will be used for the comparison of prices submitted by the different tenderers and do not in any way constitute an obligation for the Commission to place orders equivalent to those set out in the form. Actual specific contracts and orders may include different assignments and different project breakdowns.

The prices submitted should cover all fees and administrative expenditure, except the reimbursable expenses referred to below.



The calculation of the offered price should be based on the workload expressed as number of Work Units (WU) as defined in this table:

<i>Request type</i>	<i>Request denomination</i>	<i>number of WU</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>Standard</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>Specific</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>Complex</i>	<i>2</i>



■ Part A: Professional fees and direct costs

A.1 Quarterly fixed flat fee

An overall fixed quarterly fee which includes:

- 4 000 Work Units as defined in the price schedule
- all staff costs
- all costs for infrastructure and telecommunications, except, if applicable, the direct costs payable to the involved telephone network operators for the *transfer of and registration* of new European and national free phone numbers used for this service
- registration of contact details, queries, reply elements and other data in the "Workflow / Management system",
- maintenance and regular updating of the basic documentation stored in the "knowledge database".
- preparation of monthly statistics and feedback, as well as the annual and ad hoc reports
- attendance by at least 1 person of 4 review meetings per year in Brussels, in addition to the initial information session offered at the start of the contract
- regular liaison with the Commission,
- services provided in all official EU/EEA languages.

A 2. Price per work unit

A price per work unit for work of the type normally covered by the Quarterly fixed flat fee, that during one single calendar quarter exceeds the 4000 work units included in the Quarterly fixed flat fee for that month.

A 3. Additional operations

A price per person day for additional ad hoc operations.

■ Part B: Reimbursable expenses

- *Travel expenses (other than local transport costs). See point 5.9 above.*
- *Subsistence expenses of the Contractor and his staff (covering the expenditure incurred by experts on short-term trips outside their normal place of work)*
- *If applicable, the direct costs payable to telephone network operators for the transfer of existing European and national Free phone numbers from the current helpdesk operator Contractor and for registration of new such numbers*
- *If applicable, costs related to redirection of incoming calls*

The total price = Part A + Part B

12. Composition of a partnership or consortium



Tenders can be submitted by groupings of service providers/suppliers who will not be required to adopt a particular legal form prior to the contract being awarded, but the consortium selected may be required to assume a given legal form when it has been awarded the contract if this change is necessary for proper performance of the contract¹.

However, a grouping of economic operators must nominate one party to be responsible for the receipt and processing of payments for members of the grouping, for managing the service administration, and for coordination. The documents required and listed in the following points 13 and 14 must be supplied by every member of the grouping.

Each member of the grouping assumes a joint and several liability towards the Commission.

13. Exclusion criteria and supporting documents

1) Bidders must provide a declaration on their honour, duly signed and dated, that they are not in one of the situation referred to in Articles 93 and 94 a) of the Financial Regulation.

Those articles are as follows:

Article 93:

Applicants or tenderers shall be excluded 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 their 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;

¹ These entities can take the form of an entity with or without legal personality but offering sufficient protection of the Commission's contractual interests (depending on the Member State concerned, this may be, for example, a consortium or a temporary association).

The contract has to be signed by all members of the group, or by one of the members, which has been duly authorised by the other members of the grouping (a power of attorney or sufficient authorisation is to be attached to the contract), when the tenderers have not formed a legal entity.



- 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.

Article 94:

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.

2) The tenderer to whom the contract is to be awarded shall provide, within a time limit defined by the contracting authority and preceding the signature of the contract, the evidence referred to in Article 134 of the implementing Rules, confirming the declaration referred to in point 1 above.

Article 134 of the Implementation Arrangements – Supporting documents

1. *The contracting authority shall accept, as satisfactory evidence that the candidate or tenderer is not in one of the situations described in points (a), (b) or (e) of Article 93 of the Financial Regulations, 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 these requirements are met.*

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 of the Financial Regulations, a recent certificate issued by the competent authority of the State concerned.*

Where no such document or 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 applicant is established, the documents referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 above shall relate to legal entities and/or physical persons, including, where considered necessary by the awarding authority, company directors or any person with powers of representation, decision-making or control in relation to the tenderer.*

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.

3) The contracting authority may waive the obligation of a candidate or tenderer to submit the documentary evidence referred to in Article 134 of the Implementing Rules, if such evidence has already been submitted to it for the purposes of another procurement procedure launched by DG EMPL and provided that the issuing date of the documents does not exceed one year and that they are still valid.



In such a case, the candidate or tenderer shall declare on his honour that the documentary evidence has already been provided in a previous procurement procedure and confirm that no changes in his situation have occurred.

14. Selection criteria

The assessment will be made in stages. Only the offers that fulfil the selection criteria detailed below will be selected for the award stage.

A) Economic and financial capacity: Tenderers must provide sufficient information to satisfy the Commission of their financial standing and more particularly that they have the necessary resources and financial means to carry out the work that is the subject of the tender and that the tenderer is viable for the duration of the contract.

-Documents to be provided

- 1) A statement of the tenderer's overall turnover **for the previous three financial years**.
- 2) A **bank declaration** providing evidence of sound financial standing.
- 3) **Accounts** – balance sheets and profit and loss accounts – **for the last three financial years**, for which accounts have been closed, **certified by an external audit**, if required by national law.

If, for some exceptional reason which the contracting authority considers justified, the tenderer or candidate is unable to provide the references requested by the contracting authority, he may prove his economic and financial capacity by any other means which the contracting authority considers appropriate.

-Minimum criterion

The tenderer's average turnover for the last three years, for which accounts have been closed, must be at least 800,000 EUR

B) Technical capacity: Tenderers have to prove their ability, skills, experience and competence for performing the work.

Technical and professional capacity to carry out the contract will be assessed on the basis of the following::

- 1) The tenderer must have at least 3 years of experience in the provision of services similar to those described in points 5-5.9 above



2)

The project manager must have very good knowledge of English, at least basic knowledge of French, and at least 5 years experience in a similar position in the field of services described in points 5.1-5.9

3) The members of the proposed helpdesk must have at least good combined knowledge of written and spoken English, French and German

-Means of proof required

1) A list of the **principal services** provided in the past 3 years in relation to the services described in points 5.1-5.9 specifying the dates, recipients of the services and a short description of the services provided.

2) **Human resources:** Tenderers must include in their tenders the following information:

Curriculum vitae of all the key personnel responsible for carrying out the contract, in particular the **Project Manager** mentioned in point 8.1 above, specifying:

- Academic and other qualifications and primary background.
- Expertise and experience relevant to the subject of the contract, indicating dates, place of work and recipients of the work (in particular those services implemented on behalf of the tenderer).

3) List of CVs of the proposed team that will be directly operating the helpdesk service (Please refer to Annex IV)

If the Contractor plans to **subcontract** part of the work, he must specify the part concerned and the name of the sub-contractor and supply details of the financial, economic and technical capacity of the subcontractor.

Tenderers which have not provided the required information or for which the Commission determines that they do not have the necessary minimum capacity will be eliminated without further assessment.



15. Award criteria

The Contract will be awarded to the bid offering the best price/quality ratio, taking account of the following criteria:

a) Quality of the bid

1. Overall quality of the organisation proposed, taking into account the entire workflow and the proposed methodology	25
2. Quality of the technical infrastructure proposed for carrying out the services including access to telephone and other networks, the Workflow / Management system, the knowledge database and the production of statistics	30
3. Quality of the measures proposed for ensuring the quality of replies within the fixed deadlines, including procedures for communication with the Commission and the continuous updating of the knowledge database and training of the staff involved.	30
4. Quality of measures to guarantee availability of service, continuity and processing of requests.	15
Total points	100

Points will be awarded on the basis of the information provided by the tenderers in their bids.

Please note that the contract will not be awarded to any bid that receives less than 70 in the award criteria.

b) Financial terms assessed on the basis of the price schedule and the specimen quotations

The price, as estimated according to the specimen quotation, will be divided by the total points, with the lowest bid being chosen.

16. Content and presentation of bids

Content of bids

Tenders must include:

- all information and documents necessary to enable the Commission to appraise the bid on the basis of the selection and award criteria (see points 14 and 15 above);*
- a bank ID form duly completed and signed by the bank;*



- *a "legal entity" form duly completed;*
- *the price;*
- *the detailed CVs of the proposed experts;*
- *the name and function of the Contractor's legal representative (i.e. the person authorised to act on behalf of the Contractor in any legal dealings with third parties);*
- *proof of eligibility: tenderers must indicate the State in which they have their registered office or are established, providing the necessary supporting documents in accordance with their national law.*

Presentation of bids

Bids must be submitted in triplicate (i.e. one original and two copies).

They must include all the information required by the Commission (see points 12, 13, 14 and 15 above).

They must be clear and concise.

They must be signed by the legal representative.

They must be submitted in accordance with the specific requirements of the invitation to tender, within the deadlines laid down.



PRICE SCHEDULE AND SPECIMEN QUOTATION

ANNEX II TO DOSSIER NO VT/2011/009

1. Price schedule

Description of tasks	Unit	Unit price in EUR
<p>A1. Quarterly fixed flat fee</p> <p><i>including</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 000 Work Units, where a request category A corresponds to 1 WU, a request B to 3 WU and a request C to 2 WU • all staff costs • all costs for infrastructure and telecommunications, except, if applicable, the direct costs payable to telephone network operators for the transfer of and registration of new European and national free phone numbers used for this service • registration of contact details, queries, reply elements and other data in the "Work flow / Management system", • maintenance and regular updating of the basic documentation stored in the "knowledge database". • preparation of monthly statistics and feedback, as well as quarterly management reports and the annual and ad hoc reports • attendance by at least 1 person of 2 review meetings per year in Brussels, in addition to the initial information session offered at the start of the contract • regular liaison with the Commission, • services provided in all official EU/EEA languages. 	<p>Quarter of a year</p>	
<p>A 2. Price per work unit</p> <p><i>A price per work unit for work of the type normally covered by the Quarterly fixed flat fee, that during one single calendar quarter exceeds the 4000 work units included in the Quarterly fixed flat fee for that quarter.</i></p>	<p>Work unit (WU)</p>	



A 3. Additional operations <i>Additional work on request not included in the description above</i>	<i>Person day</i>	
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2. Specimen quotation for one year

<i>Description of tasks</i>	<i>Number of units</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Unit price in EUR</i>	<i>Price</i>
<i>Operation of the EURES Helpdesk at the quarterly flat fee.</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>Quarter</i>		
<i>Additional work units exceeding the 4000 WU included in the flat fee</i>	<i>2500</i>	<i>WU</i>		
<i>Additional work on request not included in the description above</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>Person day</i>		

<i>TOTAL price for comparison</i>	
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