

European Commission

Call for Tenders TAXUD/2012/AO-06

For Provision of Services for Quality Assurance, Quality Control and Project Management of IT activities managed by DG TAXUD (QA3)

Tendering Specifications

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1 Foreword

The present call for tenders will be managed as described in Annex IV – Guidebook for Tenderers, *Submitting an offer in response to a call for tenders for IT services issued by the Directorate General for Taxation and Customs Union*, which is an integral part of the present tendering specifications.

2 Description of the services covered by the call for tenders

2.1 Background

Since the end of the 1980s, the Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union (DG TAXUD) and the administrations of the concerned Member States and associated countries have developed and operated a portfolio of IT systems in support of the fiscal and customs policies of the European Union. There are a total of more than 60 central IT systems and over 20 distributed trans-European systems (TES) that have been implemented; some of these systems are centralised and operated by DG TAXUD, others use a fully-distributed architecture and their components are developed and operated by the National Administrations (NA) of the Member States and of the associated countries (Candidate Countries/Third Countries). These systems are critical for the functioning of the internal market in fiscal and customs matters.

All of these systems use a common middleware infrastructure for their interoperability, the Common Communication Network/Common System Interface (CCN/CSI) that has been operational since 1999 and is fundamental for their functioning. In particular, the fully-distributed IT systems that support the functioning of regimes such as VAT, excise duties, transit, import, export, etc, use CCN for the totality of their data exchanges, without which they cannot function. In 2011, there were over 1.222 million data exchanges on CCN/CSI.

The existing contractual structure for IT in DG TAXUD comprises of the following:

- a) Framework contracts for the specification, development and maintenance of IT systems in the field of fiscal and customs matters - ref. FITSDEV2 and CUSTDEV2;
- b) Framework contract for IT service management, covering applications management, operations, hardware infrastructure and building infrastructure for both CCN and central applications (ITSM2 Lot 1)
- c) Framework contract for the provision of support services for the coordination of implementation of trans-European systems in Member States (ITSM2 Lot 2);
- d) Framework contract for operations, integration and control of IT service management for IT systems and Infrastructure operation (ITSM2 Lot 3);
- e) Framework contract for the specification, development, maintenance and operation of CCN - ref. CCN/TC;
- f) Framework contract for the provision of network services to CCN - ref. CCN/WAN2;
- g) Framework contract for quality assurance - ref. QA2.

2.2 Purpose

This invitation to tender covers the procurement of services and deliverables for Quality Assurance (QA), Quality Control (QC) and Project Management (PM) of IT activities under the management of the Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union.

This call for tenders covers the procurement of IT services and deliverables to:

- a) provide the take-over from the current QA2 contractor;
- b) provide coordination with involved parties (meetings);
- c) provide maintenance and evolution of the TEMPO methodology;
- d) provide QA/QC services, including reviews of deliverables from other contractors, coordination of the review process, QC of the Service Level Management (SLM) processes of other contractors, QC of testing activities;
- e) perform audits (quality / security / ad hoc) of other contractors;
- f) provide technical support and support to continuous improvement of IT maturity;
- g) provide project management support;
- h) provide the hand-over of all deliverables and services to DG TAXUD or to any specified third parties on its behalf.

The details of the activities, services and deliverables are described in Annex II – Technical Specifications.

3 Implications of submitting an offer

3.1 Impact on other calls for tenders and/or current contracts

The attention of the tenderers is drawn to the fact that he must declare any situation of conflict of interest in accordance with Article 94 of the Financial Regulation, in particular in relation to the current contracts that the Commission has signed in the area of customs, taxation and excise IT projects – see Annex VI – Declaration on confidentiality and no conflict of interest.

The Commission requires a strict segregation of duties between the services to be delivered under the QA3 contract and the ones delivered under current contracts signed or awarded in the area of taxation and customs IT projects.

The tenderers who are involved in the provision of services under any one or several of these current contracts are required to provide the measures that they commit to take in case they would be awarded the contract, in order to provide the Commission with the guarantee of absence of any conflict of interest as specified under Article 94 of the Financial Regulation.

The tenderers for whom the measures proposed to avoid the conflict of interest are considered to be, or proved to be, insufficient, will be excluded from the award of the contract on the basis of Article 94 (a) of the Financial Regulation.

3.2 Duration of the offer

The tenderer is reminded that, by submitting an offer, he commits to maintain his offer for a period of 12 (twelve) months (see Annex IV – Guidebook for Tenderers, section 4.2.2) and to sign the framework contract in case of award.

3.3 Total estimated budget

The estimated value of the contract is 40 000 000 EUR.

3.4 The conditions of the Framework Contract

The successful tenderer will sign a Framework Contract with the European Commission - DG TAXUD. The Framework Contract will be based on the information contained in the Call for Tenders and its annexes. The tender will be annexed to the Framework Contract. However, in case of conflict between the information appearing in the tender and that provided in the Call for Tenders, the latter one shall prevail.

Therefore, the tenderers are invited to clarify any point they find unclear during the time available for making requests for clarification about the Call for Tenders.

On this basis, any assumptions or hypotheses written by the tenderers in their tenders shall not be taken into consideration by the European Commission – DG TAXUD.

4 Collaborating with other companies

See also Annex IV – Guidebook for Tenderers, section 5.

4.1 Joint offers

Tenders from consortia of firms or groups of service providers, contractors or suppliers must determine the primary contractor and specify the role, qualifications and experience of each member of the tendering party.

Joint offers will be assessed as follows:

- a) The exclusion criteria (section 6.1) will be assessed in relation to each company individually.
- b) The selection criteria:
 - for economic and financial capacity:
 - 1st and 2nd indents (section 6.2.1) will be assessed in relation to each company individually,
 - 3rd and 4th indents (section 6.2.1) will be applied to the tendering group as a whole,
 - for the technical and professional capacity (section 6.2.2.) will be assessed in relation to the tendering group as a whole.
- c) The award criteria (section 6.3) will be assessed in relation to the tendering group as a whole.

4.2 Subcontracting

As mentioned in Annex IV – Guidebook for Tenderers, section 5.2, the Commission approves subcontracting for the current tendering specifications under the following conditions:

- a) a clear indication of the proportion of the contract value that the tenderer intends to subcontract must be given in the offer (see Annex IV – Guidebook for Tenderers, section 5.2.2);
- b) subcontracting requires prior written consent of the Commission during the implementation of the contract. The contractor remains solely liable for a correct performance under the contract;
- c) the exclusion criteria (section 6.1) will be assessed for each proposed subcontractor.

5 Information on the contract resulting from the present call for tenders

5.1 Duration

The framework contract resulting from the present call for tenders will have an initial duration of three (3) years as from the date of signature and may be renewed up to two (2) times, each for an additional period of one (1) year.

5.2 Model framework contract

The framework contract that will be signed with the winning tenderer will be based on the model that can be found in Annex X – Model Framework Contract.

5.3 Payment conditions

The following types of payment methods will be available with respect to different deliverables and services (Annex X.A Part I – General Conditions, Article I.5.1):

- a) **Fixed Price (FP)** (default method): invoicing on deliverables acceptance according to the terms of the corresponding Specific Contract (SC)
- b) **On Demand (OD)** (typically to cover Requests for Action (RfA): concerning services or deliverables with unit prices): unless otherwise specified in the RfA, quarterly invoicing of the RfAs closed and accepted during the past quarter.
- c) **Quoted Times and Means (QTM)** (typically to cover RfAs concerning services quoted as man-days): unless otherwise specified in the RfA, quarterly invoicing of the RfAs closed and accepted during the past quarter.
- d) **Travel and subsistence costs (T&S)**: The expenses, when not specified to be part of service prices, of missions will be invoiced quarterly, supported by detailed justifications, split between travel and subsistence and calculated following the rules specified in Annex X.B – Reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses.

The last payment of a specific contract must, as a principle, not be less than 20% of the total amount of the SC and it must be linked to the acceptance of all the deliverables and reports and services ordered under the SC, including all Monthly or Quarterly progress reports.

5.4 Prices

Prices must be quoted in EUR using, when needed, the conversion rates published in the C series of the *Official Journal of the European Union* on the day when the notice of Call for Tenders was published.

Unit prices must be quoted for services listed in Annex III – Price Table.

These prices will **include** travel and subsistence expenses for missions (trainings, workshops, meetings, etc) at the Commission's premises (Brussels and Luxembourg) and/or at any other contractor's premises within a distance of ≤ 50 km of the Commission's premises. Therefore, no additional travel and subsistence expenses will be reimbursed **between** Commission's premises (Brussels and Luxembourg).

Travel and subsistence expenses for all other missions will be reimbursed according to the rules specified in the Framework Contract. The cost of such missions is to be calculated on the basis of Annex X.B – Reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses and will be quoted by the Commission in a separate budgetary provision.

Prices must be quoted free of all duties, taxes and other charges, including VAT, as the European Union is exempt from such charges under Articles 3 and 4 of the Protocol on the privileges and immunities of the European Union. If any, the amount of VAT must be shown separately.

5.4.1 Benchmarking

The tenderers have to be aware of the obligation to provide the possibility of regular benchmarking according to Annex X.A Part III – General Terms and Conditions for Information Technologies Contracts, Articles 1.1 and 2.10.

5.4.2 Indexation

Prices shall be fixed and not subject to revision for Specific Contracts placed during the first year of performance of the Framework Contract or Amendment (see Annex X.A Part I – Special Conditions, Article I.3.3).

All price elements of Annex III – Price Table may be subject to revision on the basis of indexation, except for the provisions set by the Commission and the price elements that are expressed in percentage of another one.

From the beginning of the second year of performance of the Framework Contract, prices may be revised upwards or downwards each year, where such revision is requested by one of the contracting parties by registered letter no later than 31st July in order that the new rates may take effect on 1st January of the following year.

Specific Contracts shall be placed on the basis of the prices in force on the date on which they are signed. Such prices shall not be subject to revision unless and only when the duly signed Specific Contract provides that it will be in force after the 1st January of the following year.

This revision shall be determined by the trend in the harmonised consumer price index EU27 published by the Office for Official Publications of the European Union in the Eurostat

Monthly Bulletin at <http://www.ec.europa.eu/eurostat/> [HICP – Harmonized Indices of Consumer Prices; DATA; Database, HICP- Monthly Data].

Revision shall be calculated in accordance with the following formula:

$$P_r = P_o \times \frac{I_r}{I_o}$$

where:

P_r = revised price;

P_o = price in the original tender;

I_o = index for the month corresponding to the final date for submission of tenders

I_r = index for the month corresponding to the date of receipt of the letter requesting a revision of prices.

5.5 Security assessment

Tenderers are informed of the obligations laid down in the Commission Decision of 16 August 2006 C(2006)3602 concerning the security of information systems used by the European Commission and the Commission Decision 2001/844/EC, ECSC, Euratom of 29 November 2001).

The Commission draws the tenderers' attention to the contractual provisions on security (Annex X.A Part III – General Terms and Conditions for Information Technologies Contracts, Article III.2.2) and confidentiality (Annex X.A Part II, General Conditions, Article II.16).

The tenderers' attention is also drawn on the fact that all third party personnel and Commission contractors must undergo pre-employment and/or pre-contractual screening carried out in accordance with relevant laws and regulations, and proportional to the business requirements, the classification of the information to be accessed, and the perceived risks.

Additionally, the awarded contractor shall authorise, upon request, the Security Directorate to perform background checks on its proposed personnel from outside the EU before they are allowed to work on Commission projects.

6 Evaluation of the offers

The evaluation of the offers will be conducted based on the rules set out in Annex IV– Guidebook for Tenderers, section 9.

As far as the limitation of length of answers is concerned, the following rules are to be applied:

- Some questions set an absolute limit of length of the answer.
- In all other cases, the limitation of two pages per question should be applied, as defined in Annex IV – Guidebook for Tenderers, section 6.3.5.

6.1 Exclusion criteria

The exclusion situations are listed in Annex IV – Guidebook for Tenderers, section 9.1.

In case of a joint offer, these evidences need to be provided for each company.

The attention of the tenderers is drawn to the fact that the exclusion criteria are applicable to any subcontracting party proposed by the tenderer. The subcontractors will have to supply the evidence that they satisfy those criteria.

6.2 Selection criteria

6.2.1 Economic and financial capacity

Tenderers are required to prove that they have sufficient economic and financial capacity to perform the contract.

The required documentation in that respect is listed in Annex IV – Guidebook for Tenderers, section 9.2.1:

- a) Evidence of professional risk indemnity insurance; valid at the time of submission of the offer;
- b) Balance sheets for at least the last three financial years for which accounts have been closed;
- c) A statement of overall turnover and the turnover related to the scope of the contract, during the last three financial years, which establishes that they are equal or superior to 60.000.000 EUR and 40.000.000 EUR respectively.

The thresholds will be verified based on the turnover figures for at least the three (3) last years (2009, 2010 and 2011). In case of consortium, these thresholds will be verified on the level of the consortium.

6.2.2 Technical and professional capacity

Please refer to Annex IV – Guidebook for Tenderers, section 9.2.2.

Tenderers are required to prove that they have sufficient technical and professional capacity to perform the contract. To this end they must fill in Annex I.A – Questionnaire and provide documentation which confirms that they meet the criteria set in this annex I.A in relation to:

- a) Vision, strategy and service culture;
- b) References in relation to similar services/contracts;
- c) Tenderer organisation and manpower relevant for the provision of the required services;
- d) Qualifications and experience of the managerial staff;
- e) Methods, processes and automated tools;
- f) Certificates and Measurement;

Detailed explanations for the selection criteria are given in Annex I.A – Questionnaire.

6.3 Award criteria

6.3.1 Technical evaluation

Please refer to Annex IV – Guidebook for Tenderers, section 9.3.1.

Tenderers have to fill in the Annex I.A – Questionnaire, section 5 and provide the supporting documentation.

The technical evaluation of the offers will be based on a rating of the quality criteria below, with the indicated weighting:

Award Criteria	Weight	Max. points	Min. points to obtain
1) Fitness of the proposed approach to implement the contract requirements and foreseen activities	20	200	100
2) Fitness of the proposed organisation	30	300	150
3) Fitness of the proposed methods and processes	40	400	200
4) Fitness of the proposed ICT infrastructure	5	50	25
5) Structure, clarity and completeness of the proposal	5	50	25
TOTAL	100 %	1000	

The technical evaluation will be carried out by establishing an overall technical score for the technical proposal that takes into account the individual scores for the award criteria listed above.

The quality of the offers will be evaluated by the degree to which they fulfil the requirements specified for the work and supply adequate solutions to the tasks to be implemented. The marks in brackets indicate the importance given to each award criterion which is stated in weight (percentage) and points. The maximum overall score is 1000.

Selected companies will have to score at least 50% for each award criterion.

An overall score of 600 points or more is also required.

The offer found to be the best quality will receive a **normalised quality indicator** of 100 points. The remaining offers will receive lower normalised quality indicators in proportion to their quality.

6.3.2 Financial evaluation

Please refer to Annex IV – Guidebook for Tenderers, sections 9.3.2 and 6.3.6.

The financial evaluation will be performed on the basis of the prices stated in the Annex III – Price Table.

The financial offer must be clear and in compliance with the tendering specifications and its annexes.

Any assumption, hypothesis or condition in the formulation of the financial offer shall cause rejection of the whole offer.

The basis for the price assessment is the total price for evaluation.

Offers for which the technical quality assessment score is less than 600 points or offers for which less than half the points are scored on an individual criterion will not be considered for the price assessment and for the award of the contract.

The offer found to be the cheapest will receive a **normalised price indicator** of 100 points. The remaining offers will receive lower normalised price indicators in proportion to their prices.

6.3.3 Award

Please refer to Annex IV – Guidebook for Tenderers, section 9.4.

The offer presenting the best value for money will be identified in the following way:

A weighting factor of **70%** will be applied to the **normalised quality indicator** and a weighting factor of **30%** will be applied to the **normalised price indicator**. The highest result will indicate the offer presenting the best value for money:

$$(\text{normalised quality} \times 70\%) + (\text{normalised price} \times 30\%) = \text{normalised result.}$$

The highest normalised result will establish the offer presenting the best value for money.

7 Preparing and submitting the offer

Please refer to Annex IV – Guidebook for Tenderers, sections 6 and 7.

In order to facilitate the clarity of the offers, if the offer consists of several binders, the tenderers have to include a summary table in the offer, clearly indicating the content of each binder.

The tenderers have to make clear reference in each question of the questionnaire where the answers are given in the offer.

8 Additional information

The baseline is provided on DVD-ROM as Annex XI.

The DVD-ROM provided by the Commission is available only on written request
by e-mail to the mailbox: "taxud-tenders@ec.europa.eu"

or

by mail to the following address:

European Commission,
Directorate-General Taxation and Customs Union
Unit R1, "Finances and Human Resources"
For the attention of Mr Jean-Louis Vergnolle (J79 6/40)
Rue Joseph II, 79
1000 – Brussels

The information and the documents on the DVD-ROM are the sole property of the Commission (unless otherwise specified), and are provided without prejudice and for the exclusive use of the tenderer.

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