Ref. Ares(2013)27781 - 10/01/2013

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
TAXATION AND CUSTOMS UNION
Resources
Taxation systems & IT compliance

Brussels, 10/01/2013
TAXUD.R1/LLV (2012) 22210

Subject: Call for tenders TAXUD/2012/AO-06
Provision of Services for Quality Assurance, Quality Control and Project Management of IT Activities managed by DG TAXUD (QA3) – 2012/S 195-319965

- Replies to questions

Dear Madam, Dear Sir,

You will find in the Annex to this letter the replies to all the questions received up to 8 January 2013.

This letter is being posted on the website of the Directorate General for Taxation and Customs Union, at this URL address.

http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/tenders_grants/tenders/index_en.htm

Questions received subsequently will be answered in further letters which will be placed regularly on the same website. Prospective tenderers are invited to monitor this site attentively.

Please note that the deadline for submission of tenders is 18 January 2013. Therefore, requests for additional information received less than five working days before the closing date for submission of tenders, i.e. after 13 January 2013, will not be processed.

Yours faithfully,

(e-signed)
Paul Hervé Theunissen
Head of Unit

Question no. 1:

Question related to Annex_1, Section 5:

The group of questions 5.1.1 is titled as follows: "All services and deliverables other than Take-over and Hand-over". However, the question 5.1.1-3 requires to provide DLV 2.0.1 – Take-over Plan and DLV 5.1.1 – Hand-over Plan.

According to our understanding, these overlap with the questions 5.1.2 and 5.1.3, where the Take-over and Hand-over deliverables are required again.

Can you please provide us with the following clarifications:

In which reply should we include the deliverables DLV 2.0.1 – Take-over Plan and DLV 5.1.1 – Hand-over Plan? Is it In 5.1.1, or in 5.1.2 and in 5.1.3 respectively?

Reply

The proposal of structure and content for the deliverables DLV 2.0.1 – Take-over Plan and DLV 5.1.1 – Hand-over Plan should be provided in sections 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 respectively.

Question no. 2:

Question related to Annex_1, Section 4:

In our understanding, the Question number 4.3 is to be replied by the consortium as a whole, in case of joint tenders. But each company has its own organization / location for service delivery/ responsible entity/…

Please clarify if we need to limit the reply to this question to the consortium organization that will be put in place for the service provisioning for this contract? Or do we have to explain the role of each component of the consortium?

Reply

Questions under section 4.3 of the Questionnaire concern the tenderer organisation and manpower relevant for the provision of the required services.

In the case of joint offers, the tendering specifications mention in section 4.1 that the selection criteria for the technical and professional capacity will be assessed in relation to the tendering group as a whole.

Consequently, the information to be provided concerns the tendering group as a whole.

Question 4 under section 4.3.1 of the Questionnaire addresses the role of each component of the tendering group.

Question no. 3:

In case we are bidding in a joint offer submitted by a **group of tenderers**. In annex1 is stated that the Company acting as **main point of contact** doesn't has to fill in bullet point 4 of section 3; for the **other companies** taking part in the joint tender is also mentioned that these companies doesn't have to fill in bullet point 4 of section 3.

Can you confirm that this is correct and in that case who will have to supply the statement of overall turnover?

Reply

Your understanding is not correct. Annex 1 states that bullet point 4 of section 3 has to be filled in by the company acting as main point of contact on behalf of the group of tenderers. Please see page 3 of the referred document: "NB: This Company has to fill in all sections of this questionnaire (…): - Section 4 on behalf of the group of tenderers (including bullet point 4 of section 3).

Question no. 4:

Will DG TAXUD, in order to have a fair financial evaluation with respect to the existing supplier, exclude the cost for hand-over and take-over of the total financial offer for each respondent?

Reply

No.

Question no. 5:

Question 4.4. of Annex I Questionnaire

The question is: "Have you included the CVs for the management staff that you commit to assign as responsible for the contract, service, project and quality management?" However, you only foresee below 3 roles "Contract management", "Service Management" and "Quality Management".

a) Do you expect CVs for the "project management" role as well?

b) If so, do you have specific requirements for this profile?

c) Can you confirm that you expect maximum 5 CVs per role, i.e. 15 CVs in total or 20 CVs in case we have to include Project management CVs?

Reply

a) No

b) No

c) Yes

<u>Question n° 6</u>:

Questions 5 of Annex I Questionnaire

a) Questions 5.2.4 and 5.3.2 are the same, except the part "taking into account of the separate identity of the different business/support threads". Please clarify what difference you make between the 2 questions and what you expect for each answer.

b) Same for questions 5.2.11 and 5.4.1

Reply

a) The scope of question 5.2.4 concerns the proposed organisation. The scope of question 5.3.2 concerns the proposed methods and processes.

b) The scope of question 5.2.11 concerns the proposed organisation. The scope of question 5.4.1 concerns the proposed ICT infrastructure.

<u>Question n° 7</u>:

Question related to Annex_II.B:

On page 34 of the document, the Qualification (WP.9.6.3) testing is described; while describing the content of QC form there is reference to CT. Is mentioning CT here intentional?

Reply

The text "Identification of the CT test campaign" on page 34 of Annex II B is to be replaced by the text "Identification of the Qualification".

<u>Question n° 8</u>:

Question related to Annex_II.B :

On page 66 of the document there is below mentioned text:

“The QA3 contractor must specify size, provide, host, install, configure, operate, monitor and administer the necessary office infrastructure (and its maintenance) in his premises, located in the European Union, for…”

As an entity replying to this Invitation to Tender, is our assumption correct that, the response and future delivery model for the services requested in this tender should exclude any delivery model where services are planned to be offered from outside of European Union (such as Morocco, Poland, Turkey, Philippines or India)

Reply

Yes, your assumption is correct.

Concerning the countries from outside the EU that you mention in your question between brackets, please note that Poland is a Member State of the Union since 1st May 2004.

<u>Question n° 9</u>:

Question related to Annex_II.B:

After careful study of "WP.0.5 Internal QA and QC activities" on page 13 and 14 (1.2. SPECIFICATIONS OF THE WORK PACKAGES) , we tried to established the relationship with services and deliverables listed in "1.3.4. SERVICE AND DELIVERABLE CATALOGUE". Particularly on Page 52 there is mention of following deliverables and services under the same work package (WP.0.5):

DLV-0.5-2 "Author's position on technical and quality review comments".

SE-0.5-3 "Participation to the review meeting to clarify author's position on review comments and reach agreement on implementation of the review comments (either in the Commission's premises or by conference call)."

It appears the notion on abovementioned Services and Deliverables from Section (1.3.4) are not described at all in Section 1.2.

Can the commission provide more details about the context of these services and deliverable in frame of QA3 Services and deliverable expectations?

Reply

WP.0.5.1 under section 1.3.4 tackles the production of the QA deliverables with the required level of quality. In this respect, the deliverables DLV-0.5-2 and SE-0.5-3 are provided during the acceptance process of the QA3 document deliverables, in particular during the T2 period (see section 1.3.2 Acceptance Mechanism).

<u>Question n° 10</u>:

Question related to Annex I, 4315 (Section 4.3.1. "*Description of your organisation*" – 5th question)

DG TAXUD mentions "function". Can you confirm "function" refers to organisational entities?

Reply
A single organisational entity may provide one or more function(s).

<u>Question n° 11</u>:

Question related to Annex_II.B:

Section 2.4 p.66: “The QA3 Contractor needs to be available to provide activities and participate in "out of premises" missions and/or meetings from Monday to Friday, from 8:00 to 20:00 (Brussels time), that is, 5 days/week, except 25.12 and 01.01.”

There is an inconsistency with the RFP Annex 10a (Framework Contract template), which defines the “normal working days” as “From Mondays to Fridays inclusive, excepting Commission holidays only.[...]”

Please clarify whether QA3 services are expected also during EC holidays.

Reply

Yes, QA3 services are expected also during EC Holidays.

<u>Question n° 12</u>:

Question related to Annex_II.B:

Section 1.3.4, p.52: for WP 0.5, please clarify the meaning of the following items: DLV-0.5-2 and SE-0.5-3, which seem out of context.

Reply

See answer to question n° 9

<u>Question n° 13</u>:

Question related to Guidebook for tenderers:

Guidebook for tenderers, section 6.3.2. Replying to mandatory questions:
"You should pay particular attention to questions labelled "Mandatory". These questions require an unconditional affirmative answer ..."

Could you please specify which are the mandatory questions?

Reply

Section 6.3.2 of Guidebook for tenderers (Annex IV) refers to questions labelled as "Mandatory" in the Questionnaire (Annex I).

<u>Question n° 14</u>:

Question related to the technical and professional capacity – Q 4.2

In question 4.2.1 at least five (5) client reference contacts are requested for different customers other than the European Commission. The third column of the table in same question 4.2.1 asks for reference to the SRF forms provided in 4.2.3.

a) Given that in question 4.2.3 exactly five SRFs are requested and that there is no mention of precluding the European Commission as a customer, are we to assume that the list of contacts provided in question 4.2.1 should not be identical than the ones in the corresponding SRFs of question 4.2.3?

b) Could you please clarify what is the difference (if any) between the customers in question 4.2.1 and 4.2.3?

Reply

a) no

b) there is no difference between the customers in question 4.2.1 and 4.2.3

<u>Question n° 15</u>:

Could you provide a description for the Pqam (quality assurance and methodology), Pcons (consultancy), Paud (audit), Pbpm (business process modelling), Pqac (quality assurance and control), Ppm project management) roles?

Reply

The Annex III "Price Table" provides the mapping between the roles and the respective activities and work packages each role should perform.

<u>Question n° 16</u>:

What are the conditions to have access to Taxud infrastructure (technology requirements, security…) either to login as an enduser with external laptop or to integrate a system with access to internal resources (eg. Index content of TEMPO with a search engine hosted on our own facilities)?

Reply

The requirements are described in Annex IIB – Technical annex, section 1.2, WP.1.6.
The future of TEMPO is described in Annex IIB – Technical annex, section 1.2, WP.9.8.3.
There are no requirements for the QA3 contractor to access internal resources of DG TAXUD.

Question n° 17:

Question related to Annex 2B - 20/76 : WP 3.0 Video recording of training sessions

How sophisticated is the content to be provided :

a) a single "uncut" video file of the training session (if less than 2 hours)

b) multiple edited files corresponding to the agenda of the training with titles and advanced navigation options

Reply

The requirements are described under Annex IIB – Technical annex, section 1.2, WP.3.0 (a series of individual video files with maximum duration of two hours each).

Question n° 18:

Question related to Annex 2B - 20/76 : WP 3.0 Video recording of training sessions.

Is there a recommended format for the video files?

Reply

NO

Question n° 19:

Question related to Annex 2B - 20/76: WP 3.0 Video recording of training sessions.

Does the QA3 contractor need to provide dissemination technologies for on-line access to the content (e.g. for on line elearning)?

Reply

NO

Question n° 20:

Where will TEMPO be hosted? Taxud/DIGIT or QA3 operator's facilities?

Reply

The hosting of TEMPO is described in Annex IIB – Technical annex, section 1.2, WP.9.8.3.

<u>Question n° 21</u>:

For service reference forms, is the offsite requirement mandatory?

Reply

YES. As mentioned in Annex I – Questionnaire, services need to be performed at the premises of the tenderer.

<u>Question n° 22</u>:

Is 40 million € the maximum budget or an order of magnitude?

Reply

40 million € is an estimation of expenditure made at the time of the publication of the call for tenders. Please note that this "estimated value of the contract" does not necessarily correspond to the budget allocated.

<u>Question n° 23</u>:

Regarding the annex 3, what could be the average size (in number of pages) for documents submitted for 9.4.1 A-1 and for 9.4.1 B-1?

Reply

There is no such figure. Bidders are invited to consult the QA3 Baseline under folder "Example of technical documentation from other contractor" to find example of documents subject to reviews.

<u>Question n° 24</u>:

Have the existing tools to manage the comments and the knowledge base been developed totally or partially on proprietary basis?
To what extend can the QA3 contractor expect to inherit the tools currently in place?

Reply

The comments database tool has been developed by the QA contractor and belongs to DG TAXUD. It will be inherited by the QA3 contractor. The requirements are listed in Annex IIB – Technical annex, section 1.2, WP.9.7.1.

The knowledge management (see requirements in Annex IIB – Technical annex, section 1.2, WP.0.9) is a new work package. As such there is no tool to be inherited by the QA3 contractor.

Question n° 25:

With the requirements on video recording of trainings, do you mean video recording of live training sessions using a camera, or capturing of presentations using a software tool accompanied by audio?

Reply

The requirements for video-recording are described in Annex IIB – Technical annex, section 1.2, WP.3.0: they consist of video-recording of live training sessions using a camera.

Question n° 26:

The service reference form related to the question 4.2.3 – attachment 1 of the questionnaire – make reference to project similar to ICT managed services (number of incidents / problems/ changes / releases / …. Performance indicators, hosting, number of SLAs…. ITSM tools,…) more than quality assurance services or technical assistance and support to assist a client in the management and quality assurance / control of projects delivered by other 3rd parties. Please confirm the validity of this form for the QA3 call for tenders procedure or submit another SRF?

Reply

The validity of the SRF is confirmed. It is a general purpose form which has to be filled-in according to QA3 call for tenders scope.

Question n° 27:

Could you please provide us with an overview of the variation of the workload of the review on a monthly basis (preferably in number of pages) for the last 3 years?

Reply

This information is available from in the Baseline under folder "QA quantities engaged".

Question n° 28:

Annex 1 - Question 5.3.3 (p 21/35):
Which processes are you referring to? To the contract management/service management/demand management processes mentioned in question 5.3.2 (on the same page)? If not, could you please specify?

Reply

Question 5.3.3 refers to the maturity of process in general. It thus targets all the QA3 processes (Please see Annex 1 - Question 5.3.1).

<u>Question n° 29</u>:

Annex 3:

Is English language correction considered as a comment in DLV-9.4.1A-2 and in DLV-9.4.1B-2 ?

Based on the assumptions you provide in Annex 3 (tab "TBP" lines 49 and 50), we understand that you expect an average of 1 comment every 10 pages in the sense of DLV 9.B.1A-2 (quality only review). Is this correct?

Reply

(a) **Yes, English language correction may be considered as one comment if English language correction is part of the review criteria to be agreed in advance with DG TAXUD for the document to be reviewed. See the requirements described in Annex IIB – Technical annex, section 1.2, W.P.9.4.1.**

(b) **No, there is no expectation in terms of average number of comments per page. The number of comments may vary according to the review criteria to be agreed with DG TAXUD prior to the start of the review and according to the level of quality of the document under review. Please see also reply to Question 27.**

<u>Question n° 30</u>:

This is about the service reference forms, are services rendered to EU Commission admissible as a SRF? It is understood that they are not allowed as client references (which is the previous question).

Reply

Please see reply to question n°14.

<u>Question n° 31</u>:

Are some of the EU Agencies which are considered as part of EU Commission, be used as client references and/or in SRFs?

Reply

Yes, since EU Agencies are different legal entities.

<u>Question n° 32</u>:
Question regarding Annex I – Questionnaire.

Could you clarify the relative weight for the technical evaluation of the sub questions of 5.1.1.3, 5.3.1 and 5.2.7?

Reply

No, because there is no such relative weight defined.

<u>Question n° 33</u>:

Question regarding Annex I – Questionnaire. Question 5.2.5:

a.Could you clarify what you mean with "external 3rd parties involved in the delivery of the requested services" ?

Reply

Please see reply 33.d below.

b. Are they the TAXUD contractors that the QA3 contractor is auditing in the context of its QA/QC activities?

Reply

Please see reply 33.d below.

c. Are they any other contractors (audited or not) ?

Reply

Please see reply 33.d below.

d. could you please provide additional information ?

Reply

The external 3rd parties (including QA contractor) involved in the delivery of the requested services are described in Annex II.A – Terms of Reference, section 3.4.2 (current) and section 3.4.3 (to be).

<u>Question n° 34</u>:

Question concerns Annex I – Questionnaire

Could you please provide us with an overview of the proportion of the types of format of documents the QA3 contrator should anticipate (Word, Excel, PDF, Powerpoint, Aris...)?

Reply

Examples of documents are provided in the Baseline. Currently, the majority of the documents to be reviewed are in Word format.

<u>Question n° 35</u>:

Question concerns Annex I – Questionnaire

Could you specify what is meant by "demand management" in the questionnaire, in particular in questions 5.2.4 and 5.3.2?
Do we have to understand it as service request management or is it used according to the ITIL terminology?

Reply

(a) Requirements on Demand management are defined in Annex IIB – Technical annex, section 1.2, W.P.0.8. Additional information is provided in Annex II.A – Terms of Reference, section 3.6.

(b) "Demand management" is a term used according to ITIL terminology (as it tries to forecast the provisioning of QA services as closely as possible).

<u>Question n° 36</u>:

Question concerns Annex I – Questionnaire

We understand that there are different versions of Tempo, and that the one to be used by contractors is Tempo+. Is our understanding correct? If so, could you give us access to it to have a correct and more accurate view of the requirements that we will have to comply with?

Reply

Contractors have to use Tempo (and not Tempo+). Please, see Annex II.A – Terms of Reference, section 3.7.13.

<u>Question n° 37</u>:

Question concerns Annex I – Questionnaire. Section 5.1.1

Point 3. - "*A specific proposal of structure and content for each of the deliverables of the following work packages...":*Please clarify what is expected as structure and contents of "DLV-0.1-1: interaction model (see WP.0.6) to be part of the FQP". Is this a proposal for each of the WP.0.6 deliverables listed in the QA3 TA, §1.3.4. Service and deliverable catalogue?

Reply

This question targets DLV-0.1.1 (FQP) and in particular one item to be found in the FQP and defined in Annex IIB – Technical annex, section 1.2, W.P.0.1: "an interaction diagram between the roles on the QA3 contractor side and the Commission side, in particular, to fulfil the requirements set in WP.0.6"