



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR ENERGY

Directorate C - Renewables, Research and Innovation, Energy Efficiency
C.2 - New energy technologies, innovation and clean coal

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

INVITATION TO TENDER NO. ENER/C2/2016-502

EIP SCC MARKET PLACE

CONTRACT NOTICE: OJ 2016/S 063-107762

Last update: 29/04/2016

Question 1: As this is a service contract, it is important that tenderers know precisely how many events they will be responsible for in the course of the 36 months, in order to estimate costs accurately. Please confirm the maximum number of Action Cluster meetings, collaborative workshops and side events per year that the contractor will be expected to organise.

Answer: The number of events is stated in the [Tender Specifications](#) on page 12. In fact the minimum requirements are specified. A maximum number of events can't be given according to the fast moving and changing context the EIP SCC Market Place is operating in.

Question 2: Please specify the locations of the General Assemblies, Action Cluster meetings, collaborative workshops and side events.

Answer: The General Assemblies' venues will be defined approx. 6 months before, taking inter alia into consideration the political settings (the next General Assembly on 24 May in Eindhoven is a Dutch Presidency event, for example). As specified in the [Tender Specifications](#) on page 12 one of the Action Cluster meetings may be organised within the frame of the General Assembly.

Otherwise and in general terms the locations of these meetings will be discussed and defined in collaboration with the European Commission services involved in the Smart Cities and Communities EIP.

Question 3: Please confirm the duration of the General Assemblies, Action Cluster meetings, collaborative workshops and side events, as this will have a direct impact on venue hire and catering costs.

Answer: The General Assemblies organised to date took between one and two days (plus on-site preparation time determined by the service provider).

All other meetings had durations between a half and a full day. This shall serve as an approximate average duration and does not constitute a statement of a fixed duration from the European Commission's side.

The European Commission expects tenderers to foresee reasonable overheads to cope with unforeseen changes in an event's program or duration.

Question 4: The travel and accommodation costs for VIPs, speakers and participants are not mentioned. Please confirm that the contractor will not be responsible for these costs, nor for reimbursing these costs to the participants.

Answer: Please refer to Section 1.6 of the Tender Specifications – Part E, Financial Offer: *"The quoted price must be a fixed amount which includes all charges (including travel and subsistence). Travel and subsistence expenses are not refundable separately."*

This means, unless explicitly stated otherwise in the Tender Specifications for a particular type of cost, that the tenderers must include in their budgets (financial offers) all costs required to carry out the tasks.

As for this particular type of cost, it is pointed out on page 14 of the [Tender Specifications](#) the tenderer has to cover *"Secretarial support to the Action Cluster and initiative lead persons, including management of the reimbursement of travel costs up to a ceiling of € 500,00 for up to 30 such members for up to four meetings per year (the budget allocation for this shall be presented in the proposal)"*.

Question 5: Please confirm that all conferences, workshops and meetings will be conducted in English only.

Answer: We confirm that all conferences, workshops and meetings will be held in English. The language skills and quality levels we refer to are for the English language.

Question 6: As this is a service contract, it is important that tenderers are able to estimate accurately the volume of written content that they will be required to produce in the course of the 36 months, in order to calculate the corresponding costs. Please confirm the number of information leaflets, brochures, reports, newsletters and other relevant documents that the contractor will be required

to produce. Please also indicate the format and length of each of these products (e.g. 28 pages A4).

Answer: The tenderer is according to the [Tender Specifications](#) asked to provide minutes of each meeting. Since the number and contents of each meeting will vary it is impossible to determine the average length and/or scope of any of these documents. In general terms these documents should not be too long, straight to the point and purposeful while following the quality criteria set out in the [Tender Specifications](#).

Potential tenderers are invited to have a look on the web site of the EIP SCC Market Place (<http://eu-smartcities.eu>) to get an idea of the length and scope of papers produced by the current Market Place team.

The monthly newsletter is also available there to get an idea of its length and content.

Question 7: Will printing be done by OPOCE, or should tenderers budget for the costs of printing 3.000 copies of each information product?

Answer: Printing will be done by the tenderer. For information products such as brochures professional design and printing is expected. For other documents such as meeting minutes, a lower quality (laser prints) will be acceptable.

In any case the respective quality levels must be agreed and clarified with the European Commission to avoid double work and unwanted results.

For the inclusion of costs into the financial offers, please refer to question 4 above: the budget of the tenderers must be sufficient to enable to carry out all tasks with the expected quality.

Question 8: Please clarify whether the contractor will also be responsible for the creation of original content for the EIP SCC Market Place's web site. If so, please specify the type, length and frequency of publication of this content.

Answer: The approach of the tenderers to all tasks should be rather proactive, proposing approaches and solutions on their own part.

The tenderers must propose, in their technical offers, their approach to the tasks related to the web site, e.g. the communication to the stakeholders, the information to be presented on the web site, the manner of presentation of the information, etc., in order to better achieve the purposes of the tender.

For this particular task, the selected tenderer will be responsible for the contents on the EIP SCC Market Place's web site. It is – however – not possible to specify the exact type, length and frequency of these publications since the context, in which the EIP SCC Market Place operates is often asking for updates and additional publications (such as news items, calendar updates, etc.). The tenderer should be able to demonstrate the flexibility needed.

Potential tenderers are invited to have a look on the web site of the EIP SCC Market Place (<http://eu-smartcities.eu>) to get an idea of the type, length and frequency of publications.

Question 9: The description of Work Package 1 tasks calls for "*high quality web streaming, teleconferencing, video conferencing, wireless microphones, high class audio, etc.*". Please clarify the specifications of the teleconferencing, video conferencing and high class audio – in what situations will these services be used, by whom, and for how long at each event?

Answer: Teleconferencing/video conferencing: these services are foreseen to facilitate meetings with participants across Europe in cases, where face-to-face meetings or the physical participation of key participants is not possible.

High class audio: it is expected that the successful tenderer provides state-of-the-art audio services during events, in which these services are needed, thus typically in the frame of bigger events such as the General Assemblies.

The services are to be provided for the duration of the respective meetings and events.

Question 10: The description of WP1 tasks on page 12 of the [Tender Specifications](#) states that "*the meeting venues shall provide*" a plenary room, 6 break-out rooms and technical services. Does this specification apply only to the General Assembly, or to the General Assembly and the Action Cluster meetings, or to the General Assembly, or the Action Cluster meetings and the collaborative workshops?

Answer: This setting typically applies to the General Assemblies and Action Cluster meetings since there we typically need to facilitate a plenary setting plus breakout sessions for the Action Clusters and the roll-out initiatives thereunder.

Depending on the number of participants/the size of the collaborative workshops the same setting may also apply to the latter. Depending on the actual number of participants and the program of those meetings a lower number of breakout rooms may nevertheless be expected.

Question 11: The bullet-point concerning the collaborative workshops refers to "*section 3.2.2*". We cannot find this section in the [Tender Specifications](#). Please clarify.

Answer: This is a clerical error, in fact. The respective section is section 2.2.2 of the [Tender Specifications](#).

Question 12: To allow tenderers to calculate prices accurately, please specify the maximum number of participants to be allowed for at the two collaborative workshops and the four side events.

Answer: Since the member base of the EIP SCC's market place is constantly growing and since the setting of each event is highly individual it is impossible to specify a clear maximum number.

Based on the previous events it is nevertheless estimated that for each individual meeting the number of participants shall not exceed 200 people.

Question 13: On pages 10/11 of the [Tender Specifications](#) the following statements can be found:

"While the EIP SCC Market Place shall in general be open to everyone the potential categories of stakeholders which can be admitted to any of the above mentioned groups may include, but are not limited to, the following categories:

[...]

- *Associations, Networks, Alliances, NGOs such as Eurocities, Covenant of Mayors, Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN), European Network on Living Labs (EnoLL) to name some;*

[...]

Following the above it is crucial that the selected tenderer is neutral, impartial and transparent vis-à-vis the various stakeholders."

Is any of the mentioned networks, which are mentioned as potential stakeholders considered as "not neutral" and thus excluded from the tender?

Answer: The pre-requisite of being neutral, impartial and transparent vis-à-vis the various stakeholders must be fulfilled by all potential tenderers, independent of their nature.

According to article 148 (8) of the Regulation implementing the Financial Regulation *"the Contracting authorities may conclude that economic operators will not perform the contract to an appropriate quality standard where the contracting authority establishes that they have conflicting interests which may negatively affect the performance of the contract"*.

This means that the tenderers must declare, in their tenders, all potential situations of conflict of interest that might potentially have an impact on the implementation of some or all of the tasks (if any), e.g. an involvement in a stakeholder group. In the case of potential conflict of interest, the tenderers must also provide for the measures in order to avoid the conflict of interest to actually occur, e.g. segregation of duties and/or teams, independent quality control, etc.. It is up to the Commission to decide whether the tender is eligible, taking into account the gravity of the risk of conflict of interest and the measures proposed.

Question 14: In the [Tender Specifications](#) it is mentioned various times that *"the selected tenderer is expected to locate all personnel in Brussels to ensure closest and easiest collaboration"*.

Would tenderers be able to fulfil the requirements of closest collaboration in case that only "some" or the "main" personnel is at the European Commission's disposal in Brussels?

Answer: It is essential, taking into account the nature of the tasks that the successful tenderer can convincingly guarantee that requests of the Commission concerning the provided service are answered efficiently and effectively in a time frame. This means that the tenderer must be able to locate at least the core team in Brussels. The presentation of the team must include the location of the team members so that the Commission can decide whether the number of team members located to Brussels is sufficient to cope with the tasks with the expected quality.

Question 15: In section 2.4 of the [Tender Specifications](#), under Payments, it is mentioned that the first interim payment is done after reception and approval of the Interim Technical report, which is to be sent after 18 months.

Does this also hold for the costs for the events or can they be reimbursed when costs are made/right after the events?

Answer: Payments are in general made upon approval of the respective reports as mentioned in the [Tender Specifications](#). No other payments are foreseen.

This approach is coherent with the condition, that the tenderers would provide their financial offers as lump sum offers which cover all costs. No expenses are to be refunded separately.

Question 16: In the [Tender Specifications](#) on page 15 it is stated that *"the selected tenderer will maintain and further improve the web site of the EIP SCC Market Place"*.

Question 16a: Does maintaining the web site include hosting services, or is hosting outside the tender's scope?

Answer 16a: Yes, the web site hosting costs shall be included in the tender proposal.

As indicated above *"the quoted price must be a fixed amount which includes all charges [...]"* (according to Section 1.6 of the [Tender Specifications](#) – Part E, Financial Offer, see also question 4). Thus, all costs falling in the scope of the contract – including the web site's operation and maintenance – shall be covered by the tenderer.

Question 16b: If hosting is necessary, can you please provide information on sizing (current hosting infrastructure, size of web site, number of documents, etc.).

Answer 16b: The current setup is as follows:

- Virtual server in a private network, operation system is a CentOS 6 and Centminmod, working on NGINX; it has 16GB RAM and 8 vCores at 2.8GHz and uses SSD drives.
- Incremental security backups are made daily and weekly.
- The web site is currently 5.5GB large (= web site plus work area), it currently consists of 2848 pages, its user database contains 5180 users, out of which 4733 are active.
- A SSL certificate is in place.
- The current magnitude of costs for running the web site is approx. €450/month including server, the SSL certificate, Solr and NGINX. This includes the personnel costs for monitoring systems, update and control (24h/7days a week).

Question 16c: Are additional costs for running the web site, such as acquiring SSL certificates, included in the project's scope?

Answer 16c: Yes, all costs necessary for running the web site shall be included in the tender proposal.

As indicated above *"the quoted price must be a fixed amount which includes all charges [...]"* (according to Section 1.6 of the [Tender Specifications](#) – Part E, Financial Offer, see also question 4). Thus, all costs falling in the scope of the contract – including the web site's operation and maintenance – shall be covered by the tenderer.

Question 16d: Is maintaining the web site limited to providing security updates and minor patches, but does not include major Drupal updates?

Answer 16d: Maintaining the web site shall include all activities necessary for a reliable operation and a state-of-the-art user experience. This also includes major Drupal updates should this be necessary to achieve this.

Question 17: In the [Tender Specifications](#) on page 16 *"Measures, which will increase the accessibility of relevant information, also for non-members of the EIP-SCC Market Place (e.g. a fully integrated full text search)"* are mentioned.

Question 17a: Does this requirement aim at improving the general accessibility of content (readability, attractive presentation, suitable information architecture), rather than at specific aspects of online accessibility, e.g. according to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0?

In other words, is the current level of online accessibility sufficient and should be maintained, but not improved in the future?

Answer 17a: As already mentioned in answer 16d maintaining the web site shall include all activities necessary for a reliable operation and a state-of-the-art user experience. This would also include any means of improving the accessibility of the web site, if this should be necessary at some point.

Question 17b: On what technology is the search on the web site currently based (Drupal default, Solr, etc.)?

Answer 17b: For searches Solr is being used.

Question 18: In the Tender Specifications on page 16 "*a fully integrated collaborative workspace, to enable seamless online collaboration among stakeholders (e.g. groups of up to 100 stakeholders editing documents at the same time)*" is mentioned.

Question 18a: Does "*seamless online collaboration*" refer to tools such as Google Apps or Wikis?

Answer 18a: In fact we refer to tools such as Google Apps and the alike.

Question 18b: Should collaborative editing occur in real-time (Google Apps) or non-real-time (Wikis)?

Answer 18b: In real-time.

Question 18c: Are possible additional costs for tools such as Google Apps to be borne by the selected tenderer or are they outside the tender's scope?

Answer 18c: As indicated above "*the quoted price must be a fixed amount which includes all charges [...]*" (according to Section 1.6 of the Tender Specifications – Part E, Financial Offer, see also question 4). Thus, all costs falling in the scope of the contract – including the web site's operation and maintenance – shall be covered by the tenderer.

Question 19: In the Tender Specifications on page 17 "*maintenance and further development of [a] web-based interactive guidance tool for financing instruments, taking into account the specific needs of the self-declared user category (City topology, SME, industry, etc. ...)*" is mentioned.

Can you please provide a link to the web-based interactive guidance tool for financing instruments?

Answer: The mentioned tool is currently being developed and shall soon be available. Please check the sub site of the Action Cluster on following URL for potential updates:

<https://eu-smartcities.eu/content/business-models-finance-and-procurement>

Question 20: In chapter 2.7 of the [Tender Specifications](#) it is stated that *"the amount of work involved to carry out this contract is estimated at 3.000 man days."*

Does this mean that

a) the total budget of the project consists of personnel-cost for an estimated, actually worked 3.000 man days plus non-personnel cost (e.g. travel cost/subsistence project team, catering for events/workshops/meetings, room rent for events/workshops/meetings, reimbursement of travel cost for participants in Action Cluster Meetings etc.),

or

b) *"3.000 man days"* is meant to be a placeholder for the total project budget, i.e. personnel-cost and non-personnel-cost, which would mean – as the project tasks involve a significant share of non-personnel cost – that the actual man days spent on the project by the project team would be significantly lower than 3.000 man days?

Answer: The specified 3.000 man days are an estimation of the actual work of the tenderer's team involved in the contract; they do not represent any cost estimation.

They shall help tenderers to plan their personnel allocations accordingly, while staying inside the given boundaries of the maximum budget of € 2.700.000.

Please be reminded that *"the quoted price must be a fixed amount which includes all charges (including travel and subsistence). Travel and subsistence expenses are not refundable separately"* (according to Section 1.6 of the [Tender Specifications](#) – Part E, Financial Offer, see also question 4).