



Tender Dossier

Procurement of Consulting Services

Expert Support to Benchmarking among Western Balkan 6 Public Employment Services

Reference: 017-017

Contents

1. SUBJECT OF THE TENDER	3
2. TIMETABLE	3
3. PARTICIPATION.....	3
4. CONTENTS OF BIDS	4
5. TECHNICAL OFFER.....	4
6. FINANCIAL OFFER.....	4
7. PERIOD DURING WHICH BIDS ARE BINDING	5
8. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION BEFORE THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF BIDS 5	
9. SUBMISSION OF BIDS	5
10. WITHDRAWAL OF BIDS.....	6
11. COSTS FOR PREPARING BIDS	6
12. EVALUATION OF TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL OFFERS	6
13. SELECTION OF THE MOST FAVOURABLE BIDDER	6
14. INFORMATION ON SELECTION OF THE MOST FAVOURABLE BIDDER.....	7
15. GROUNDS FOR EXCLUSION	7
16. ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL PENALTIES	8
17. CONFIDENTIALITY	8
18. SIGNATURE OF CONTRACT(S).....	8
19. CONFLICT OF INTEREST	8
20. APPEALS PROCEDURE.....	9
21. CANCELLATION OF THE TENDER PROCEDURE.....	9
ANNEX I TERMS OF REFERENCE.....	10
ANNEX II: SERVICE TENDER SUBMISSION FORM	16
ANNEX III: STATEMENT OF EXCLUSIVITY AND AVAILABILITY	17
ANNEX IV: BUDGET BREAKDOWN	18
ANNEX V -LEGAL ENTITY FORM	19

1. SUBJECT OF THE TENDER

Subject of the tender: Procurement of consulting services

Title: Expert Support to Benchmarking among Western Balkan 6 Public Employment Services

Period of Services: 12 June 2017 – 28 February 2018

2. TIMETABLE

ACTION	DATE	TIME
Publication of the Tender	5 May 2017	
Deadline for any clarification requests to the Contracting Authority	19 May 2017	17:00 CET Central European Times
Last date on which clarifications are issued by the Contracting Authority	24 May 2017	17:00 CET Central European Times
Deadline for submission of bids	5 June 2017	15:00 CET Central European Times

3. PARTICIPATION

Participation in this tender procedure is open to the **respective consulting companies or individual consultants within bidding consortia**. The bidder should have **substantial experience** in conducting consultancy services in the area of labour market analysis. Specific knowledge of and experience in the assessment of employment and social policy measures in the Western Balkan economies is required.

Bidding consortia of individual consultants participating in this tender must indicate the members and show how the work is divided between them. Specifically, all members must name the **team leader** and authorise this member to represent the consortium and receive payments on behalf of the other members. A corresponding written authorisation, power of attorney must be attached to the bid.

With the submission of an offer, the company, or bidding consortium, accepts the contents and principles of Annex II Service Tender Submission Form and Annex III Statement of Exclusivity and Availability. If the said contents and principles of the Forms are violated by the bidder or the bidding consortium, the RCC Secretariat reserves the right to exclude the bid.

4. CONTENTS OF BIDS

The offers, all correspondence and documents related to the tender exchanged by the bidder and the Contracting Authority must be written in English.

Supporting documents and printed literature furnished by the bidder may be in another language, provided they are accompanied by a translation into the language of the procedure. For the purposes of interpretation of the tender, the language of the procedure will prevail.

5. TECHNICAL OFFER

The Technical Offer must include the following documents:

- Company profile including a brief description (up to 2 pages) of the company. In case of a bidding consortium, the team leader should submit the profile of the consortium;
- Copy of Company's Registration Certificate (in case of consulting companies). In case of a bidding consortium a corresponding written authorisation, power of attorney is accordingly treated;
- Financial records - company's balance sheet and profit-and-loss statement for the past 2 years (only in case of a bidding of consulting companies);
- CV(s) of a team leader and experts of the project team, outlining relevant knowledge and experience as described in Annex I Terms of References, along with contact details of referees;
- Brief concept note describing the main issues, information, data sources, research and analytical tools to be employed by the author as well as structure of the study and proposed timeline, as described in Annex I Terms of Reference;
- List of references for relevant activities implemented over the past 10 years demonstrating relevant experience in the subject matter;
- Service Tender Submission Form (Annex II);
- Signed Statements of Exclusivity and Availability (Annex III);
- Legal Entity Form (Annex V);

6. FINANCIAL OFFER

The proposed offer should include daily fee rate for consulting services; the fee rates should be broadly consistent with the EU framework rates for these types of professional services.

The financial offer should reflect the following:

- All figures should be expressed in EUR;
- VAT amount, if applicable, should be presented.

Annex IV Budget Breakdown

7. PERIOD DURING WHICH BIDS ARE BINDING

Bidders are bound by their bids for 90 days after the expiry of deadline for the submission of bids. In exceptional cases, before the period of validity expires, the Contracting Authority may ask bidders to extend the period for a specific number of days, which may not exceed 20 days.

8. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION BEFORE THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF BIDS

Bidders may submit questions in writing to the following contact: ProcurementforRCC@rcc.int until 24 May 2017 by 17:00 Central European Time.

No informative meeting is foreseen.

No site visit is foreseen.

9. SUBMISSION OF BIDS

Bids must be submitted by **5 June 2017, by 15:00 Central European Time**, via e-mail to ProcurementforRCC@rcc.int providing the bid is received by the above date and time.

Please make sure that the Bid is submitted in two separate folders one containing Technical Proposal and the other Financial Proposal. The documents should be submitted in a form of copies of the originals.

Or

Hand delivered directly to the Contracting Authority to the following address:

Regional Cooperation Council Secretariat
Attention to: Administration Department
Building of the Friendship between Greece and Bosnia and Herzegovina
Trg Bosne i Hercegovine 1/V
71000 Sarajevo
Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bids received after the deadline for submission will not be considered.

Hand delivered bids must be submitted using the double envelope system, i.e. in an outer parcel or envelope containing 2 separate, sealed envelopes, one bearing the words "**Envelope A - Technical Offer**" and the other "**Envelope B - Financial Offer**".

Any infringement of these rules (e.g. unsealed envelopes or references to price in the technical offer) is to be considered a breach of the rules and will lead to rejection of the bid.

The outer envelope should carry the following information:

- Address for submission of bids indicated above;
- Reference code of the tender procedure to which the bidder is responding: **Tender No. 017-017**;
- Indicate reference number;
- Words "Not to be opened before the evaluation session";
- Name of the bidder.

10. WITHDRAWAL OF BIDS

Bidders may alter or withdraw their bids by written notification prior to the deadline for submission of bids. No bid may be altered after this deadline.

11. COSTS FOR PREPARING BIDS

No costs incurred by the bidder in preparing and submitting the bid shall be reimbursable. All such costs shall be borne by the bidder. In particular, if proposed experts were interviewed, all cost shall be borne by the bidder.

12. EVALUATION OF TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL OFFERS

The technical and financial offers are evaluated in accordance with the following criteria:

EVALUATION GRID	Maximum score
A. Technical Offer (A.1+A.2+A.3)	100
A.1. Track record, references and general experience of the bidder: General work experience; evidence of other contracts of the size comparable with that of the tender; experience with clients comparable to the Contracting Authority.	20
A.2. Quality and professional capacity of the team: CV(s) satisfy the criteria set forth in the Terms of Reference and demonstrate professional capacity and experience required; quality of the team inspires confidence.	40
A.3 Quality of an outline Brief Concept Note: Bidder provided a clear outline of the work to be executed with a sound methodology; main challenges identified; the process is clear and the proposed use of resources adequate.	40
B. Financial Proposal/ cheapest price has maximum score	100

Score for offer X =

A: [Total quality score (out of 100) of offer X / 100] * 80

B: [Cheapest price / price of offer X] * 20

In evaluating the financial offer, any arithmetical errors are corrected without penalty to the bidder such that, if applicable, where there is a discrepancy between a fee rate and the total amount derived from the multiplication of the fee rate by the corresponding number of working days, the fee rate as quoted shall prevail, unless in the opinion of the Evaluation Committee there is an obvious error in the fee rate, in which event the total amount as quoted shall prevail and the fee rate shall be corrected.

13. SELECTION OF THE MOST FAVOURABLE BIDDER

Selection of the most favourable bidder will be internal, in accordance with defined evaluation and award criteria and the RCC's procedures.

The best value for money is established by weighing technical quality against price on 80/20 basis.

In addition to the results of the technical and financial evaluation, competencies based interview will be held with the selected bidder.

The contract will be awarded to the highest qualified bidder based on the skills and expertise of the proposed project team, the quality of the technical proposal, i.e. concept note, and the cost effectiveness of the financial offer.

14. INFORMATION ON SELECTION OF THE MOST FAVOURABLE BIDDER

The RCC Secretariat shall inform candidates and bidders of decisions reached concerning the award of the contract as soon as possible, including the grounds for any decision not to award a contract for which there has been competitive tendering or to recommence the procedure.

Standard letter of thanks for participation to unsuccessful bidders shall be sent within 15 days after the contract is signed with the awarded bidder.

The candidates and bidders wishing to receive a feedback may send a request within 15 days after receipt of the standard letter of thanks.

The request may be sent to the e-mail address ProcurementforRcc@rcc.int or to the address of the RCC Secretariat:

Regional Cooperation Council Secretariat
Attention to: Administration Department
Building of the Friendship between Greece and Bosnia and Herzegovina
Trg Bosne i Hercegovine 1/V
71000 Sarajevo
Bosnia and Herzegovina

15. GROUNDS FOR EXCLUSION

Candidates or bidders will be excluded from participation in a procurement procedure if it is known that:

- (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 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 judgment 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 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 judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity.

Contracts may not be awarded to candidates or bidders who, during the procurement procedure, are:

- (a) Subject to a conflict of interest;
- (b) 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.

16. ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL PENALTIES

Without prejudice to the application of penalties laid down in the contract, candidates or bidders and contractors who have been guilty of making false declarations or have been found to have seriously failed to meet their contractual obligations in an earlier procurement procedure will be excluded from the award of all contracts and grants financed by the RCC for a maximum of 2 years from the time when the infringement is established as confirmed after an adversarial procedure with the contractor.

17. CONFIDENTIALITY

The entire evaluation procedure is confidential, subject to the Contracting Authority's policy on access to documents. The Evaluation Committee's decisions are collective and its deliberations are held in closed session. The members of the Evaluation Committee are bound to secrecy.

The evaluation reports and written records, in particular, are for official use only.

18. SIGNATURE OF CONTRACT(S)

The successful bidder will be informed in writing that their bid has been accepted.

The selected bidder is expected to sign and date the contract and return it to the Contracting Authority within 7 days from the receipt of the contract already signed by the Contracting Authority. Other candidates will be informed that their bids were not accepted by means of a standard letter.

The selected bidder will be awarded the contract for services covering the entire period.

Contract proposal is not provided at this stage.

19. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Contractor shall take all necessary measures to prevent or end any situation that could compromise the impartial and objective performance of the contract. Such conflict of interests could arise in particular as a result of economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties, or any other relevant connection or shared interest. Any conflict of interests which could arise during performance of the contract must be notified in writing to the Contracting Authority without delay.

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to verify that such measures are adequate and may require additional measures to be taken if necessary. The contractor shall ensure that their staff, including their management, is not placed in a situation which could give rise to conflict of interests. The Contractor shall replace, immediately and without compensation from the Contracting Authority, any member of its staff exposed to such a situation.

The Contractor shall refrain from any contact which would compromise its independence or that of its personnel. If the Contractor fails to maintain such independence, the Contracting

Authority may, without prejudice to compensation for any damage which it may have suffered on this account, terminate the contract forthwith.

The Contractor shall, after the conclusion or termination of the contract, limit its role in connection with the project to the provision of services. Except with the written permission of the Contracting Authority, the Contractor and any other Consultant/Expert, contractor or supplier with whom the Contractor is associated or affiliated shall be disqualified from the execution of works, supplies or other services for the project in any capacity, including tendering for any part of the project.

Civil servants and other agents of the public administration of the RCC Participants, regardless of their administrative situation, shall not be recruited as experts in contracts financed by the RCC Secretariat.

The Contractor and anyone working under its authority or control in the performance of the contract or on any other activity shall be excluded from access to RCC Secretariat financing available under the same project unless they can prove to the Contracting Authority that the involvement in previous stages of the project does not constitute unfair competition.

20. APPEALS PROCEDURE

Bidders believing that they have been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may petition the RCC Secretariat directly. The RCC Secretariat must reply within 15 days of receipt of the complaint.

The appeal request may be sent to the e-mail address ProcurementforRcc@rcc.int or to the address of the RCC Secretariat:

Regional Cooperation Council Secretariat
Attention to: Administration Department
Building of the Friendship between Greece and Bosnia and Herzegovina
Trg Bosne i Hercegovine 1/V
71000 Sarajevo
Bosnia and Herzegovina

21. CANCELLATION OF THE TENDER PROCEDURE

In the event of cancellation of the tender procedure, bidders will be notified of the cancellation by the Contracting Authority. If the tender procedure is cancelled before the outer envelope of any tender has been opened, the unopened and sealed envelopes will be returned to the bidders.

Cancellation may occur where: the tender procedure has been unsuccessful, i.e. no qualitatively or financially worthwhile bid has been received or there is no response at all; the economic or technical data of the project have been fundamentally altered; exceptional circumstances or force majeure render normal performance of the contract impossible; all technically compliant bids exceed the financial resources available; there have been irregularities in the procedure, in particular where these have prevented fair competition.

ANNEX I TERMS OF REFERENCE

Expert Support to Benchlearning among Western Balkan 6 Public Employment Services

Title: Experts on Public Employment Services Performance Management

Contracting Authority: Regional Cooperation Council Secretariat

Reporting to: RCC Secretariat

Duration: 12 June 2017 – 28 February 2018

Number of Posts: 7 (1 team leader and one expert from each of: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo¹, Montenegro, Serbia and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

Reference Number: 017-017

I BACKGROUND

Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to contribute to enhanced cooperation and implementation of a benchlearning initiative among Public Employment Services of the Western Balkan economies, drawing on the experience of the EU PES network.

Background Information

The *Employment and Social Affairs Platform* (ESAP) is a regional project financed by the European Commission and jointly implemented by RCC and ILO in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo², Montenegro, Serbia and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The project, which began its implementation in 2016 and lasts for 3 years, aims to strengthen regional cooperation and institutional capacities of national administrations, employers' and workers' organizations, enabling them to develop and effectively implement labour market and social policy reforms in their EU enlargement process.

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

The four specific objectives of RCC-implemented action of the Employment and Social Affairs Platform project are directed towards:

1. Enhancing regional cooperation and establishing of a structured regional Employment and Social Affairs Platform
2. Supporting the processes for preparation, monitoring and follow up of the integrated Economic Reform Programmes (employment and social component) and monitoring of the current Employment and Social Reform Programmes
3. Enhancing the capacities of the relevant administrations for improved policy outcomes and policy reviews related to the prioritized employment, human capital and social policies
4. Strengthening the capacities and the existing PES Network with a view to facilitating the SEE 2020 labour mobility objective and preparations for future participation in the European Employment Services (EURES)

For the purposes of this tender, and drawing from the EU PES experience, ‘benchlearning’ refers to the process of creating a systematic and integrated link between benchmarking and mutual learning activities, that consists of identifying good performances through indicator-based benchmarking systems and of using findings for tangible and evidence-informed mutual learning activities.

RCC has commissioned a study of current performance management practices of the Western Balkan PES and a proposed methodology for the implementation of benchlearning. The study has been shared with representatives of Western Balkan PES offices, which have familiarized themselves with the benchlearning concept.

The study has proposed the following benchmarking indicators:

1. The transition rate from *factual* unemployment into employment in the primary labour market (with and without a subsidy either to the employer or the jobseeker)
2. The share of all transitions from *factual* unemployment into employment in the primary labour market which happen within 6 or 12 months (or both) of factual unemployment (“speed of transitions”)
3. The number of vacancies notified to the PES relative to the number of all hirings in the economy (“PES market share in hirings”)

Additional indicators, especially context related, can be proposed by the Western Balkan PES benchmarking working group.

Areas of benchmarking through qualitative internal and external assessment of performance enablers will include:

1. Strategic performance management;
2. Design of operational processes such as effective channelling and profiling of jobseekers and tailored use of active labour market instruments;
3. Sustainable activation and management of transitions;
4. Relations to employers;
5. Evidence-based design and implementation of PES services;
6. Effective management of partnerships with stakeholders;

7. Allocation of PES resources.

II DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Objectives and Scope of the Assignment

The overall objective of this assignment is to enhance cooperation among Western Balkan Public Employment Services and implement a qualitative benchmarking initiative, in line with the best EU practice in this area.

Specific Tasks

The scope of services under this assignment includes the following deliverables:

Task 1(team leader): Provide expert advice, guidance and support to the process of performance benchmarking among Western Balkan PES offices, in line with the best EU practice in this field.

The scope of services under this assignment includes the following deliverables:

1. Conduct training for representatives of PES and national experts on the methodology of the assessment and the use of the assessment framework
2. Review and provide comments to the national self-assessment and external assessment reports
3. Edit a comparative analytical report on WB PES performance
4. Provide ad hoc technical support and advice as required

The envisioned level of effort is set at a maximum of 30 days of experts input.

Task 2 (6 national experts): The scope of services under this assignment includes the following deliverable:

1. Support the PES office in completing a self-assessment and preparing the self-assessment report, based on the assessment framework used in the EU PES benchlearning
2. Develop the concept and agenda and participate in and support a national multilateral review (external assessment) that will take place in the national PES office
3. Take the lead in preparing a report on the findings for all performance enabler indicators, including strengths and areas for improvement and identifying evidence based good practices for the mutual learning events. At least one good practice should be identified in each participating PES. A separate 2-3 page good practice fiche needs to be prepared.
4. Participate in regional working group meetings and workshops on benchlearning

The total level of effort is set at a maximum of 20 days of each expert input for a total of 120 working days.

The above benchlearning activities will be conducted with a view to supporting at a later stage the organization of mutual learning events and producing practitioners’ guides/toolkits on selected areas.

ESAP will be in charge of the logistic and financial organization of all the envisaged activities, while the tenderer will only provide own expert contribution in the different tasks and activities under this assignment.

Methodology

The tenderer is expected to come up with the best approaches for undertaking this research. However, the following guiding principles should be taken into consideration:

- i. Desk review of secondary data including PES annual reports, assessments, evaluations and other related documentation.
- ii. Interviews with relevant PES officials and other stakeholders.
- iii. Any other methods applicable.

Lines of Communication

The tenderer will submit all reports and timesheets to the ESAP Project Team Leader and RCC for review and approval of deliverables. The tenderer will work closely with the ESAP project team from whom they will seek guidelines to efficiently conduct the work. The final outputs will be shared with the national stakeholders and will be presented and discussed in a regional meeting of the ESAP working group.

Timeframe

The service contract will be concluded for a period June 2017 and February 2018.

Deliverables	Due date (from mobilisation)
Inception Report	6 weeks
Progress Report	5 months
Final Report	28 February 2018

III PROFILE AND COMPETENCIES OF THE TENDERER

The tenderer should have ample experience in the fields of PES performance analysis and assessment, and employment analysis, data collection, mutual learning, statistical analyses and drafting high quality reports.

In order to carry out the above tasks, the tenderer should propose a team leader and a core team of experienced experts, which will include one national expert from each of the Western Balkan six economies.

Criteria related to the team members delivering the service:

Criteria related to the team leader:

Education:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Post-graduate degree in Social Sciences, Business, Economics, Statistics or related field.
Experience:	<p>Qualifications and Skills Required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 10 years of relevant experience in the work of employment services, PES performance management or PES mutual learning - Extensive experience in analysing respective quantitative and qualitative data on PES and labour markets - Experience of working with the EU PES network and the benchlearning exercise - Knowledge of and experience with the work of PES offices in the Western Balkan economies is desirable - Excellent communication and report writing skills - Analytical skills and ability to conceptualise and write concisely and clearly
Language requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fluency in English, as the official language of the RCC. ▪ Knowledge of other languages of the region desirable.

Criteria related to national experts:

Education:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Post-graduate degree in Social Sciences, Business, Economics, Statistics or related field.
Experience:	<p>Qualifications and Skills Required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At least 5 years of relevant experience in the work of employment services or PES performance management ▪ Extensive experience in analysing respective quantitative and qualitative data ▪ Knowledge of and experience with the work of PES offices in the Western Balkan economies ▪ Experience in European cooperation between PES and measurement of PES performance is desirable ▪ Excellent communication and report writing skills ▪ Analytical skills and ability to conceptualise and write concisely and clearly

Language requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fluency in English, as the official language of the RCC. ▪ Fluency in at least one Western Balkan language.
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Core Values

- Demonstrates integrity and fairness by modelling RCC values and ethical standards;
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability.

Core Competencies

- Demonstrates professional competence to meet responsibilities and post requirements and is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results;
- Result-oriented; plans and produces quality results to meet the set goals, generates innovative and practical solutions to challenging situations;
- Communication: Excellent communication skills, including the ability to convey complex concepts and recommendations clearly;
- Team work: Ability to interact, establish and maintain effective working relations in a culturally diverse team;
- Ability to establish and maintain productive partnerships with regional and national partners and stakeholders.

IV QUALITY CONTROL

The Contractor should ensure an internal quality control during the implementing and reporting phase of the assignment. The quality control should ensure that the draft reports comply with the above requirements and meet adequate quality standards before sending them to stakeholders for comments. The quality control should ensure consistency and coherence between findings, conclusions and recommendations. It should also ensure that findings reported are duly substantiated and that conclusions are supported by relevant judgment criteria.

The views expressed in the report will be those of the contractor and will not necessarily reflect those of the Regional Cooperation Council. Therefore, a standard disclaimer reflecting this will be included in the report. In this regard, the expert may or may not accept comments and/or proposals for changes received during the above consultation process. However, when comments/proposals for changes are not agreed by the expert, he/she should clearly explain the reasons for his/her final decision in a comments table.

Quality Control by the Regional Cooperation Council

The Contractor outputs shall undergo external reviews by all relevant stakeholders, including the representatives of the ESAP project team, and the Regional Cooperation Council.

ANNEX II: SERVICE TENDER SUBMISSION FORM

REF: 017-017

One signed original of this Tender Submission Form must be supplied.

1 SUBMITTED by:

	Name(s) and address(es) of the bidder submitting this tender
Full Company Name or Name of the Consortium	

2 CONTACT PERSON (for this tender)

Name	
Company/Consortium	
Address	
Telephone	
Fax	
e-mail	

3 STATEMENT

[Name of the bidder] _____ hereby declares that we have examined and accepted without reserve or restriction the entire contents of the tender dossier for the tender procedure referred to above. We offer to provide the services requested in the tender dossier on the basis of supplied documentation subject of this tender, which comprise our technical offer and our financial offer.

This tender is subject to acceptance within the validity period stipulated in the instructions to tender.

Name of Authorized Person	
Signature	
Date	

ANNEX III: STATEMENT OF EXCLUSIVITY AND AVAILABILITY

REF: 017-017

By representing the bider_____ we agree to participate exclusively in the above-mentioned tender procedure. We further declare that we are able and willing to work for the period(s) foreseen for the position for which our CVs have been included in the event that this tender is successful, namely:

Full Name	Available from (Date)	Available until (Date)	Acceptance by signature

ANNEX IV: BUDGET BREAKDOWN

REF: 017-017

No	Cost categories	Daily fee rate	Total Cost
...			
...			
...			
2	TOTAL COSTS		
3	VAT (if applicable):		
	GRAND TOTAL (2+3):		

- Proposed daily fee rate for consulting services should be broadly consistent with the EU framework rates for these types of professional services.

It is estimated that experts would conduct the field visit. Costs of the trip(s) will be treated separately based on actual costs of each trip i.e. accommodation, meals and transport. These costs are not subject to the price ceiling.

ANNEX V -LEGAL ENTITY FORM