

27 April 2021

SUBJECT: Network of Eurofound Correspondents

REFERENCE: 211001/5767

Dear Madam/Sir,

Eurofound is planning to award the framework contracts resulting from the above procurement procedure. The procurement documents consist of the contract notice, this invitation letter (Part A, Tender Specifications (PART B), the Standard Reply Form (PART C) and the Draft contract (Part D) with its respective annexes. All documents are available at the following TED e-tendering website¹:

<https://etendering.ted.europa.eu/cft/cft-display.html?cftId=8413>

Economic operators interested in this contract are invited to submit a tender in one of the official languages of the European Union.

1. Submission of tenders

Tenders must be submitted exclusively via the electronic submission system (e-Submission) available from the above website² and accessible on the Funding and Tenders Opportunities portal (F&T portal)³. Tenders submitted in any other way (e.g. e-mail or by letter) will be disregarded.

In order to submit a tender using e-Submission, tenderers (each member of the group in the case of a joint tender but not subcontractors) will need to register in the European Commission's [Participant Register](#) - an online register of organisations participating in EU calls for tenders or proposals. On registering each organisation obtains a Participant Identification Code (PIC, 9-digit number) which acts as its unique identifier in the above register. Instructions on how to create a PIC can be found in the PIC-management [Quick Guide for Economic Operators](#). Tenderers already registered in the Participant Register shall reuse their existing PICs when preparing tenders in e-Submission.

The time limit for the receipt of tenders is **17:00 Dublin time on 18.06.2021** as indicated under Heading IV.2.2 of the contract notice.

¹ Subscription to the call for tender at the above link allows interested economic operators to receive e-mail notifications when new information or documents are published. Subscription is free of charge and does not involve any commitment to submit a tender.

² For detailed instructions on how to submit a tender please consult the eSubmission Quick Guide available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/esubmission/quickguidepp_en.pdf. For facilitation the full tender proposal including the *Standard Reply Form* may be submitted under the section Additional qualification documents as required in the *other documents* drop box. The supported browsers, file types, size of attachments and other system requirements can be consulted at: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/wikis/x/Oo5kI>. In case of technical problems, please contact the eSubmission Helpdesk (see contact details in the eSubmission Quick Guide) as soon as possible

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>

The time-limit for receipt of tenders is indicated under Heading IV.2.2 of the contract notice as well where local time shall be understood as local time at the contracting authority's location (the location indicated under Heading I.1 of the contract notice).

A tender received after the time-limit for receipt of tenders will be rejected. The submission receipt provided by eSubmission with the official date and time of receipt of the submission (timestamp) constitutes proof of compliance with the time-limit for receipt of tenders⁴.

Tenderers must ensure that their submitted tenders contain all the information and documents required by the contracting authority at the time of submission as set out in the procurement documents.

The Declaration(s) on Honour on exclusion and selection criteria (template available in the tender specifications) shall be dated and signed, either by hand or by applying a qualified electronic signature, by an authorised representative of the signatory.

When the Declaration(s) on Honour is/are signed by hand, a scanned copy must be attached to the tender in eSubmission. The successful tenderer will be requested to provide the hand-signed original(s) by post before the contract is signed.

After submitting a tender, but before the deadline for receipt of tenders, a tenderer may definitively withdraw its tender⁵, or withdraw it and replace it with a new one⁶.

A withdrawal receipt will be provided by eSubmission as proof of withdrawal.

All costs incurred for the preparation and submission of tenders are to be borne by the tenderers and will not be reimbursed.

2. Legal effects of the invitation to tender and submission of a tender

This invitation to tender is in no way binding on Eurofound. Eurofound's contractual obligation commences only when the contract with the successful tenderer is signed by both parties.

Up to the point of signature, Eurofound may cancel the procurement procedure without the tenderers being entitled to claim any compensation. This decision must be substantiated, and the tenderers notified.

The validity period of the tender, during which tenderers may not modify the terms of their tenders in any respect, is indicated in Heading IV.2.6 of the contract notice.

Submission of a tender **implies acceptance of all the terms and conditions set out in the procurement documents and, where appropriate, waiver of the tenderer's own general or specific terms and conditions.** The submitted tender is binding on the tenderer to whom the contract is awarded for the duration of the contract.

3. Contacts during the procurement procedure

Contacts between Eurofound and tenderers are prohibited throughout the procedure save in exceptional circumstances and under the following conditions only:

3.1 Submission phase (before the time-limit for receipt of tenders)

⁴ If no submission receipt is received in reasonable time after submission, please contact the eSubmission Helpdesk (see contact details in the above referred eSubmission Quick Guide) as soon as possible.

⁵ A submitted tender can be withdrawn directly in the "Procurement/My Submission(s)" area in the F&T Portal. For detailed instructions on how to withdraw a tender please consult the above referred eSubmission Quick Guide.

⁶ To submit a new version, the tenderer must create a new tender in e-Submission and include all the information and documents required in the procurement documents with the submission of a tender, even if some of them have already been included in the replaced tender.

Upon request, Eurofound may provide additional information solely for the purpose of clarifying the procurement documents.

Any request for additional information must be made through the eTendering website in the "questions and answers" tab, by clicking "create a question" (registration on TED e-Tendering is required to be able to create and submit a question).

Any questions and answers or any additional information will be published on the above eTendering website. The website will be updated regularly and it is your responsibility to check for updates and modifications during the submission period.

Eurofound is not bound to reply to requests for additional information received after the **10.06.2021**.

Eurofound may, on its own initiative, inform interested parties of any error, inaccuracy, omission or any other type of clerical error in the text of the procurement documents.

3.2 Opening of tenders

Tenders will be opened in public at the time and place indicated under Heading IV.2.7 of the contract notice. A maximum of one representative per tender can attend the opening of tenders as provided in Section IV.2.7 of the contract notice. For organisational and security reasons, the tenderer must provide the full name and ID or passport number of the representative⁷ at least two working days in advance to: OSUTenders@eurofound.europa.eu. The representative will be required to present the tender reception confirmation generated by e-Submission and to sign an attendance sheet. Eurofound reserves the right to refuse access to its premises if the above information or the tender reception confirmation is not provided as required.

The public part of the opening session will be strictly limited to the following aspects:

- verification that each tender has been submitted in accordance with the submission requirements of the call for tender;
- announcement of the tenders received; the names of the tenderers (all members in the case of a joint tender) will be announced;

Eurofound reserves the right to conduct the tenders opening online only in case Covid-19 restrictions imposed by the Irish government are in place. In such case information announced during the public opening will be made available on request as stipulated below.

Tenderers not present at the opening session may send an information request OSUTenders@eurofound.europa.eu if they wish to be provided with the information announced during the public opening.

Once Eurofound has opened the tender, it becomes its property and it shall be treated confidentially.

3.3 Evaluation phase (after the opening of tenders)

Except in duly justified cases, tenderers who have failed to submit evidence or to make statements as required in the procurement documents, shall be contacted by Eurofound to provide the missing information or clarify supporting documents.

Eurofound may correct obvious clerical errors in the tender after confirmation of the correction by the tenderer. Such information, clarification or confirmation shall not substantially change the tender.

3.4 Award phase

Tenderers will be notified of the outcome of this procurement procedure by e-mail. The notification will be sent to the e-mail address provided in the e-Submission application for the tenderer (group leader

⁷ This data is necessary to ensure access to Eurofound buildings.

in case of a joint tender) under the section Contact Info. The same e-mail address will be used by Eurofound for all other communications with the tenderer. It is the tenderer's responsibility to provide a valid e-mail address and to check it regularly.

4. Data protection

If processing a reply to the invitation to tender involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV), such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC. Unless indicated otherwise, any personal data will be processed solely for evaluation purposes under the call for tenders by EUROFOUND. Details concerning the processing of your personal data are available in the privacy statement at:

<https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/about-eurofound/who-we-are/legal-and-data-protection-notice>

If you would like to exercise your rights under Regulation (EU) 2018/1725, or if you have comments, questions or concerns, or if you would like to submit a complaint regarding the collection and use of your personal data, you can contact the data controller at dataprotectionofficer@eurofound.europa.eu by explicitly specifying your request.

The tenderer's personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) if the tenderer is in one of the situations mentioned in Article 136 FR. For more information, see the Privacy Statement on

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm.

5. Means of redress.

Tenderers may submit any observations concerning the procurement procedure to the contracting authority using the contact details under Heading I.1 of the contract notice. If tenderers believe that there is maladministration, they may lodge a complaint to the European Ombudsman within two years of the date from which they become aware of the facts which form the basis for the complaint (see <https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu>).

Within two months of notification of the outcome of the procedure (*award decision*), tenderers may launch an action for its annulment. Any request tenderers may make and any reply from the contracting authority, or any complaint for maladministration, will have neither the purpose nor the effect of suspending the time-limit for launching an action for annulment nor open a new period for launching an action for annulment. The body responsible for hearing annulment procedures is indicated under Heading VI.4.1 of the contract notice.

Yours faithfully,

Sandra Brudenell-Bruce

OSU Workflow Assistant

Annexes to the Invitation to Tender - PART A:

- PART B - Tender Specifications
- PART C - Standard Reply Form
- PART D - Draft contract and annexes
- PART E - Total Reference Price Calculator