



Dear Sir/Madam,

Title: Framework service contract for the provision of expert assistance to support the European Environment Agency's activities on

- **Circular economy and industrial transformation (Lot 1); and**
- **Interlinkages between environment and health including chemicals (Lot 2)**

Reference: Call for tenders EEA/HSR/20/001

The European Environment Agency (EEA) is planning to award the public contract resulting from the above procurement procedure. The procurement documents consist of the contract notice, this invitation letter, the draft contract and tender specifications with their respective annexes. All documents are available at the following TED e-Tendering website¹:

<https://etendering.ted.europa.eu/cft/cft-display.html?cftId=5877>

Economic operators interested in this contract are invited to submit a tender in one of the official language of the European Union, preferably in English (supporting evidence does not need to be translated).

1. Submission of tenders

Tenders must be submitted exclusively via 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 case of a joint tender submitted by a consortium) 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 unique identifier in the above register. Instructions on how to create a PIC can be found on this [page](#). Tenderers already registered in the Participant Register shall reuse their existing PICs when preparing tenders in e-Submission.

¹ Subscription to the call for tenders at the above mentioned 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 e-Submission Quick Guide available at :

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/digit/opsys/esubmission/assets/documents/manual/quickGuide_en.pdf.

The supported browser, file types, size of attachments and other system requirements can be consulted at:

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/wikis/x/f6dqEg>. In case of technical problems, please contact the e-Submission Helpdesk (see contact details in the 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 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 e-Submission with the official date and time of receipt of the submission (timestamp) constitutes proof of compliance with the time limit for receipt of tenders⁴.

Tenders 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 following documents shall be dated and signed, either by hand or by applying an advanced electronic signature based on a qualified certificate, by an authorised representative if the signatory:

- Declaration on honour (template available as an annex to the tender specifications)
- The submission report (a document generated by e-Submission and listing all the documents included in the tender, to be signed by the tenderer or the group leader in case of a joint tender by a consortium).

When the declaration(s) on honour and/or the tender report are signed by hand, a scanned copy must be attached to the tender in e-Submission.

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 e-Submission 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 the contracting authority. The contracting authority's contractual obligation commences only when the contracts with the successful tenderers are signed by both parties.

⁴ If no submission receipt is received in reasonable time after submission, please contact the e-Submission Helpdesk (see contact details in the above referred e-Submission 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 e-Submission 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.

Up to the signature of the contract, the contracting authority may cancel the procurement procedure without the tenderers being entitled to claim any compensation. Any such decision must be substantiated and tenderers notified.

The validity period of the tender, during which tenderers may not modify the terms of their tenders in any respect, is indicated under 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 the contracting authority and the 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)

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

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

The contracting authority is not bound to reply to requests for additional information received less than six working days before the time limit for receipt of tenders.

The contracting authority 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.

Any additional information will be published on the above TED e-Tendering website. The website will be updated regularly and it is the tenderer's responsibility to check for updates and modifications during the submission period.

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 may attend the opening session. For organisational and security reasons, the tenderer is requested to inform the contracting authority as indicated under Heading IV.2.7 of the contract notice. The representatives will be required to present the submission receipt generated by e-Submission and to sign an attendance sheet. The contracting authority reserves the right to refuse access to its premises if the above information or the submission receipt are 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 tenders;

- Announcement of the tenders received: the names of the tenderers (all members in case of a joint tender submitted by a consortium) will be announced.

Tenderers not present at the opening session may be informed of the outcome of the process by visiting the EEA website (<https://www.eea.europa.eu/about-us/tenders>).

Once the contracting authority has opened a tender, it shall become its property and will 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 statement as required in the procurement documents, shall be contacted by the contracting authority to provide the missing information or clarify supporting documents.

The contracting authority 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 (leader of the consortium in case of a joint tender submitted by a consortium) under the section *Contact Info*. The same e-mail address will be used by the contracting authority 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

Processing replies to this invitation to tender will involve the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2018/1725⁷ on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data. Unless indicated otherwise, tenderer's replies to the questions and any personal data requested are required to evaluate their tender in accordance with the specifications in the invitation to tender and will be processed solely for that purpose by the EEA. Under Regulation (EU) 2018/1725, tenderers are entitled to obtain access to their personal data on request and to rectify any such data that is inaccurate or incomplete. Details concerning the processing of personal data are available in the privacy statement at <https://www.eea.europa.eu/about-us/tenders>. Tenderers have the right of recourse at any time to the European Data Protection Supervisor for matters relating to the processing of their personal data.

⁷ OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39.

Tenderer's personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) if they are in one of the situations mentioned in Article 136 of the Financial Regulation⁸. For more information, see the privacy statement at:

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,

[Signed]

Martin Adams
Head of Programme
Health and Sustainable Resource Use

⁸ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, OJEU L 193/1 of 30.07.2018.